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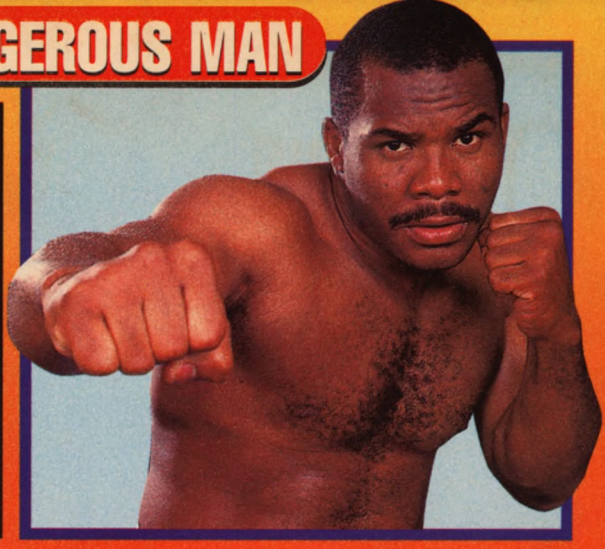

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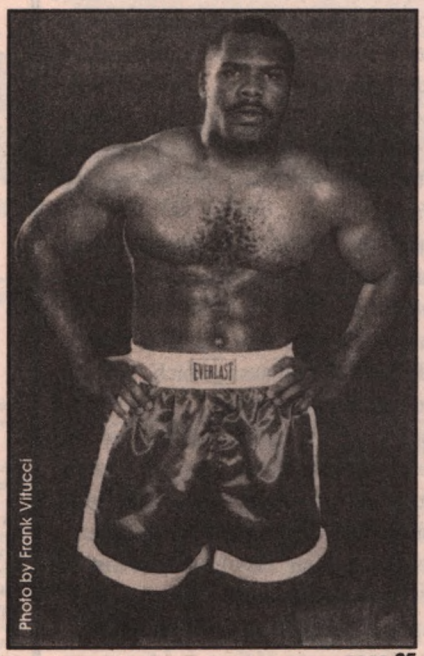

Photo by Frank Vitucci

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RINGSIDE

To one degree or another, all boxers are brave, even the least among them. But perhaps the most courageous of all are the washed-up pugs whose pride simply won't allow them to take the easy way out, guys who try to win when almost everybody else expects them to lose. Two examples of this phenomenon are Freddie Pendleton and Kevin Pompey, a couple of never-say-die warriors who fight to the bitter end, even when the odds are stacked heavily against them.

Pendleton, the former IBF lightweight titlist, has always been an underdog, the guy the media likes to point to as an example of a fighter who overcame a horrible start and a so-so record to become a champion. But "Fearless Freddie" hasn't been a world champion since February 1994, and although his decline has been gradual, he's no longer the fighter he once was. Even so, anyone who expected him to roll over and play dead when given the opportunity to challenge WBA welterweight champion James Page in July had badly misjudged the 36-year-old Pendleton. Not only did he try to beat a bigger, younger, and stronger man, he almost pulled it off, stunning Page so badly with a right hand in the ninth round that the defending champion was forced to tackle Pendleton to avoid suffering an official knockdown. Page survived the crisis and eventually wore Freddie down for an 11th-round knockout, but it was Pendleton's gallant stand, not Page's victory, that made the fight memorable.

Going into his August bout with vicious-hitting super middleweight Omar Sheika, Pompey was 4-10-1 in his last 15 fights. On paper, it looked like such a frightening mismatch, you had to wonder why the New Jersey State Athletic Commission sanctioned the bout. And when Sheika blasted Pompey to the floor twice in the second round, hard-bitten reporters familiar with Pompey's recent history were yelling for referee Tony Orlando to stop the fight. But he didn't, and Pompey not only survived, he launched a comeback the very next round. The supposed "opponent" was gamely battling back and closing the scoring gap when Sheika exploded with another flurry of headshots in the eighth. This time, Orlando didn't hesitate, swooping in and stopping the fight, much to the dismay of Pompey and the fans.

Although he wasn't punching back when the fight was stopped, Pompey was defending himself and had been in far more trouble in the second round. The loser was understandably upset, but neither his protest nor the boos from the crowd changed Orlando's mind. Afterward, Pompey circled the ring with his arms raised, and the appreciative fans gave him a well-earned round of applause, which, judging from the look on his face, meant almost as much to him as his paycheck.

Fighters like Pendleton and Pompey are among boxing's unsung heroes, gallant men who keep believing in themselves when practically everybody else has written them off. It could be argued that they would be better served calling it quits and finding another way of earning a living. But that's besides the point. What's pertinent here is that they both still give us—and their opponents—everything they have, and that is all we can ask of any fighter. So the next time you see a fighter turn in a perfunctory, just-glad-to-be-here performance, remember Pompey and Pendleton, and be thankful for their valor and stubborn refusal to bow down to the ravages of time and too many tough fights. They bring honor to the game.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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The RING

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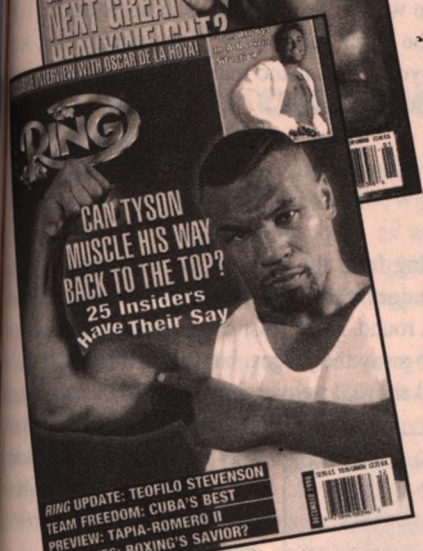

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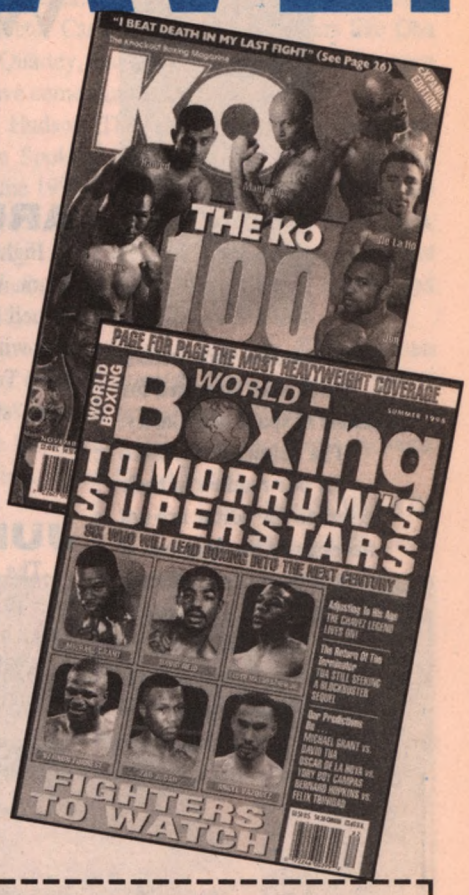

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COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. The opinions expressed by our readers in their letters to the editor are not necessarily the opinions of THE RING or its publisher. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

ARUM FOR FIGHTER OF THE YEAR

Fight of the year: Johnny Tapia vs. Paulie Ayala. Fighter of the year: Bob Arum. Yes, it's Mr. Arum. Who is going to win those titles for his fighters? Surely not them. He beat Ike Quartey and Pernell Whitaker for Oscar De La Hoya, who, by the way, is begging Mr. Bob not to put him in the ring with Sugar Shane Mosley because they think he is not marketable to the public. Now, Arum beats Tapia because he is no longer an Arum employee. Tapia is too much of a class act to deserve to be "stripped" of his titles, as he said in his postfight interview.

EDWARD MARCELENO
Dallas, TX

JUDGE DREAD

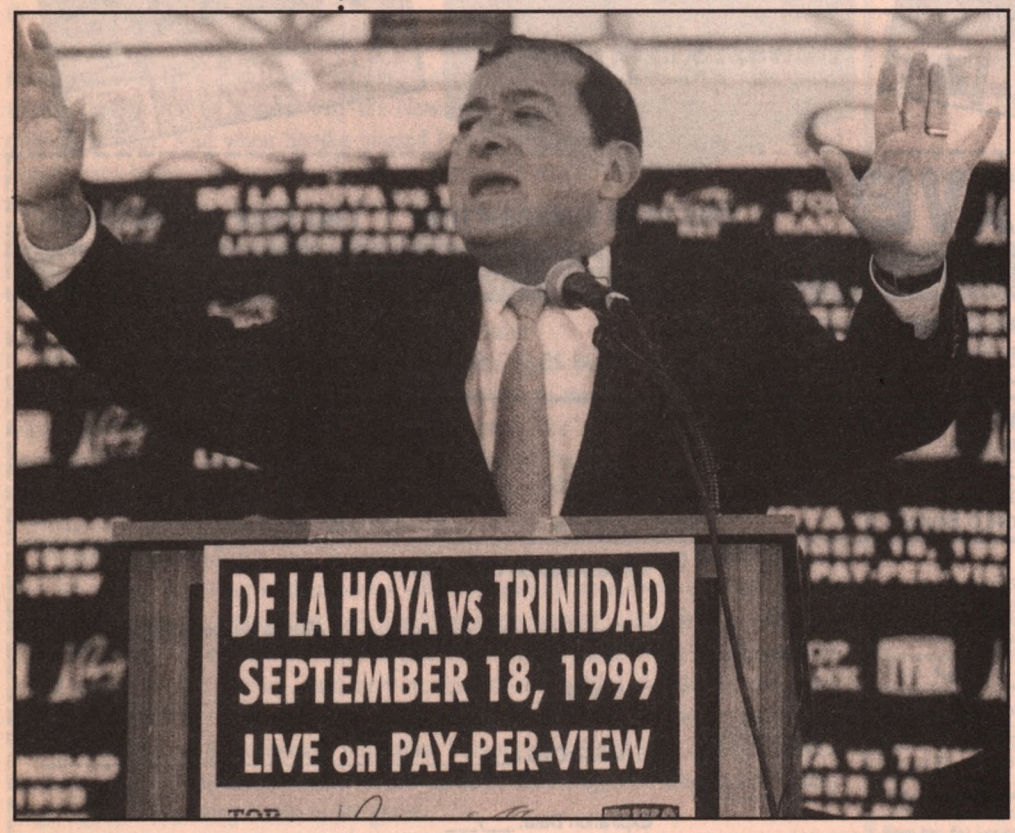
The Johnny Tapia-Paulie Ayala fight was sizzling from the onset to the outcome. However, I have to agree with the SET commentators, not the judges, that Tapia should have won the decision. I, too, had him one point ahead at the end of the 12th round. He at least should have gotten a draw.

Ayala's inside fighting was impressive enough to sway the judges, but that is not all that it takes to win a fight. Tapia was in the fight all the way and showed stamina in the late rounds when Ayala was weakening. It was Ayala's rally in the 12th that influenced the judges, but that should not have been enough to unseat the great champion.

I call this a judgment of weight discrimination. Since Tapia was the smaller man, the judges allowed that fact to mar their judgment. An experienced, analytical boxer such as Bobby Czyz, Roy Jones, Sugar Ray Leonard, and George Foreman would have seen it differently—and Bobby Czyz did see it in favor of Tapia.

Judges are there to judge mainly what they see, whereas boxers know exactly what to look for in addition to what appears on the surface. They have been in the trenches where the language is all their own for serious interpretation. This means a lot when a boxer's title—to keep or lose—hangs in the balance.

Conclusion: Laymen should



Promoter Bob Arum should be named Fighter of the Year, says reader Edward Marceleno. Marceleno suggests that Arum had more to do with Oscar De La Hoya beating Pernell Whitaker and Ike Quartey than "The Golden Boy" did.

not be judging title fights. Leave it to the professionals. Furthermore, I think a rematch should take place before Ayala meets other contenders. He has still not proven himself to be the best bantam. He has to take the title from Tapia first. You don't just muff out an undefeated record on a whim.

DAVE MAHON
Miami, FL

THE CONSENSUS IS IN

I just got finished reading your article "The Consensus On Scoring Fights: It's Time For A Change" (September 1999). It seems like a real good idea. But how about the referee? You can have the judges do their scoring, but also have the referee score as well. The referee is closer to the fighters than anyone else. He knows what to look for during a fight. He sees more than anyone else can, including judges like Eugenia Williams.

JEFF BROWN
Brooklyn, OH

REAL HARD ON THE REAL DEAL

I have one request: Please get off Evander Holyfield's back! I am referring to Eric Raskin's "Who's Hot/Who's Not" article in the September 1999 issue of THE RING, as well as to those out there who are critical of Evander for his "philandering tendencies," as Raskin put it, or for not admitting that he'd been beaten by Lennox Lewis.

I do not need to remind anyone that boxing has enough to complain about as it is. Talk with any old timer, and he'll tell you how far the sport has sunk into corruption and mediocrity. This means we don't have room to be criticizing the classy fighters we do have. So Evander doesn't want to admit he lost. So what? I challenge anyone to tell me that he or she has never been wrong or stubborn before. And so Evander has fathered some children out of wedlock. This is his and his family's business and no one else's. There are too many real enemies out there for writers and fans to play the puritan police in Evander's private life.

I understand the boxing writer's job is to keep the spirit of the fight game alive and to give credit where credit is due. I also understand that writers, like doctors, must point out where the sport is ailing and present possible cures. But to say that Evander Holyfield "sunk right along with promoter Don King to depths that would have seemed impossible a couple of years earlier," is not only flat out wrong and cruel, but it's a shot below the belt that boxing does not need.

I believe Raskin's mistake is to respect boxing more than boxers. Raskin and others should remember that boxing cannot exist without boxers, and that these boxers are only human. Maybe then he'll think twice before throwing the first stone.

CHRISTOPHER SPECK
Durham, NC

IN DEFENSE OF OSCAR

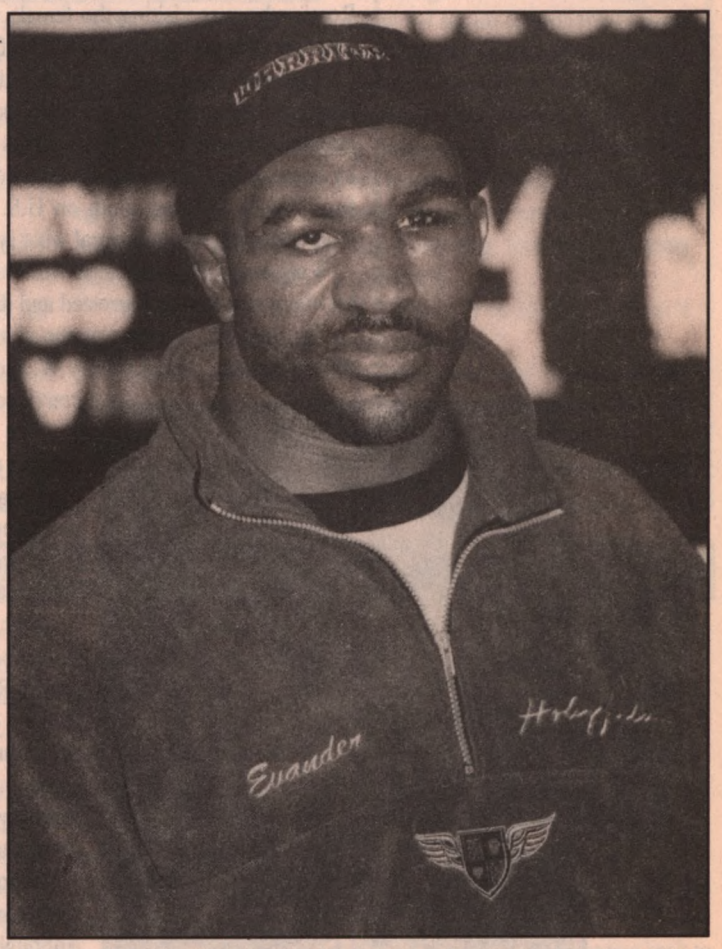
I've been in boxing for 64 of my 75 years and a fan of THE RING since it cost a quarter. This is a reply to Mr. Tarus Hudson's letter, "Oscar And Naz Unproven," which appeared in the September issue. Hudson wrote that Oscar De La Hoya had not proved anything by beating stars past their prime. Is Hudson a jester?

De La Hoya, besides winning a gold medal at the 1992 Olympic Games, has defeated quite a few champs. He's whipped Ike Quartey, Pernell Whitaker, Julio Cesar Chavez, Rafael Ruelas, Genaro Hernandez, Hector Camacho, and good fighters like Oba Carr. Carr, Whitaker, Quartey, and Chavez have 10 losses between them. Five of those have come against De La Hoya.

Listen to this, Mr. Hudson: The fans, like yourself, have spoken ("The Fans Have Spoken: Presenting The Results Of THE RING Readers' Poll, June 1999). Their choice for best fighter in the world today is Roy Jones. Second place? Oscar De La Hoya. Look again at the rest of the lists: best left hook (De La Hoya, first); best jab (De La Hoya, second); fastest hands (De La Hoya, fourth); and best defense (De La Hoya, fourth).

So if he doesn't prove anything to you, Mr. Hudson, then watch Oscar whip any of his opponents. He'll throw the fastest hands, with jarring jabs, and his devastating left hook. And after the offense, you'll see his defense. All of his fights end the same way: And the winnah is ... Oscar De La Hoya!

JOHN ECHVESTE
Paso Robles, CA ■



Give Evander Holyfield a break, pleads reader Christopher Speck, who feels "The Real Deal" remains one of the good things about boxing. Holyfield, pictured here after his draw with Lennox Lewis, disappointed many when he failed to admit he lost to Lewis in their March unification bout.

ROUND ONE

PERILOUS RENDEZVOUS

Maybe now Fernando Vargas understands why old-time trainers and managers swear that women have been the ruination of more fighters than any other single cause. Shortly after six a.m. on July 21, the undefeated IBF junior middleweight champion and four other men were arrested by the Santa Barbara (California) County sheriff's department for investigation of assault with a deadly weapon and burglary in connection with an incident that had occurred earlier that day at the home of a young woman Vargas was visiting.

Apparently, Vargas' visit was interrupted when the woman's ex-boyfriend arrived unexpectedly. The two men argued and then got into a fight. What happened next depends on whose version of the story you believe, but according to the sheriff's department, the brawl was broken up by Doug Rossi, who was visiting the female roommate of Vargas' companion. After that, the unidentified man who Vargas had tangled with left the home.

A source close to the case said that at some point during the disturbance, Vargas used his cell phone to call his friends for help, prompting the arrival of the four men with whom he was later arrested. According to Santa Barbara County officials, they forced their way into the room occupied by Rossi, beat him, and then departed. Deputies responding to a call for help spotted Vargas and his four friends heading south on U.S. 101, a few miles away from the house, and arrested them. Authorities declined to reveal what type of weapon was used in the attack, but said it was not a gun.

Vargas and the other men were released after posting bail of $10,000 each. Vargas' lawyer said his client was wrongly arrested and did not assault anyone.

"In fact, Mr. Vargas was the victim of an assault by two individuals and merely took action to defend himself," said Gregory W. Moreno of the law firm of Moreno, Becerra, & Guerrero. "We are convinced that this charge will be quickly rectified by the authorities."

Vargas: Victim or perpetrator?

Photo by Frank Vitucci

"We are receiving conflicting statements," Sgt. Bill Turner said without elaboration.

Donald Tremblay, spokesman for Main Events, the company that promotes Vargas, said it was a "classic case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time," and that he was reasonably sure Vargas would be exonerated.

Prior to the bust, things couldn't have been going any better for the 21-year-old Vargas. Less than a week earlier, he'd dominated ex-champ Raul Marquez for an 11th-round TKO in his second successful defense of the title, earning a reported purse of $500,000. A popular attraction on HBO's boxing broadcasts, Vargas appears headed for a highly lucrative unification bout with WBA counterpart David Reid probably in early-2000, providing the assault and burglary charges are cleared up.

"Ferocious Fernando" recently signed a contract with Miller to be a spokesman for the brewery's "Think When You Drink" campaign. Although the use of alcohol seemingly played no part in the regrettable episode, Vargas should definitely do a little more "thinking" before his next night out on the town.

—Nigel Collin

CHAOS ON THE CAPE

There was a lot at stake when Massachusetts rivals Kippy Diggs, from nearby Barnstable, and Worcester's Jose Rivera met in the co-feature on the July 9 ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* telecast. Diggs had seen his once-promising career practically evaporate after a pair of stunning knockout losses in 1997. Rivera had missed most of '98 with a hand injury, and was finding the road back a long one. The 2,300-seat Cape Cod Melody Tent was packed to capacity, with the overwhelming majority of the fans claiming to be either close friends or relatives of local favorite Diggs.

The fight itself was pretty even, although Rivera's inside counterpunches seemed to be wearing Diggs down. An inadvertent headbutt opened a nasty gash over Diggs' left eye in round four, and that's when things went off track. Referee Dick Flaherty, one of the Bay State's most respected arbiters, had the ringside doctor check the wound, and then let the action continue, advising Diggs to tell him if he had vision problems. Diggs and his corner misinterpreted this to mean they could stop the fight, and have a technical decision declared at their option.

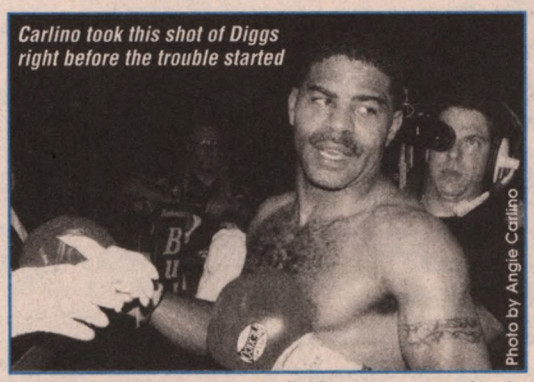

Carlino took this shot of Diggs right before the trouble started

Photo by Angie Carlino

When Rivera blasted Diggs along the ropes with a series of clean head shots in the fifth, the Cape Cod pug turned and told Flaherty that he couldn't see. The referee promptly stepped in and declared Rivera, 31-1 (21), a TKO winner.

"He said, 'I can't see,' and turned and walked away when I broke them," explained Flaherty. "That, to me, is quitting."

But when Diggs, 30-5 (22), realized what the result was, he began to protest to anyone who would listen that the fight should go to the scorecards, which were, for the record, even after four completed rounds. He stalked angrily around the ring, inciting the crowd as he went.

At some point, Rivera's manager, Steve Tankanow, suggested that Diggs pipe down, and Diggs swatted him lightly, touching off a melee in the ring. The crowded conditions in the circular tent and the lack of any ringside security soon added up to near-riot conditions. Enraged Diggs fans ran down the sloping aisles and stepped up into the ring with one little hop. By the time the first of several skirmishes was broken up, the two boxers' corners were surrounded by 50 intruders.

On the ring apron, near Rivera's corner, veteran photographer Angie Carlino was trying to take some shots and protect his two cameras from the unruly throng that swirled around him. He noticed a man call to Rivera and motion him over, as if to congratulate him. But when the Worcester fighter got close enough, the man said, "I'll knock you out myself, you little punk," and started to swing. Carlino heard the exchange, and pushed the intruder away so that he missed Rivera. Within seconds, Carlino and the instigator were wrestling and flailing away at each other. When the scrum cleared momentarily, ESPN2 viewers got a brief glimpse of Carlino ducking a punch and landing a solid forearm to the jaw.

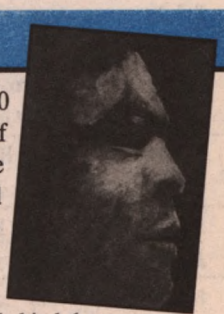
Carlino's red T-shirt was almost ripped completely off in the fracas, and as the Barnstable police finally dragged away the troublemaker, the photographer stood on the ring apron tugging on the remnants. Carlino finished the night wearing a borrowed John Ruiz T-shirt, but the fiftysomething former ice hockey player downplayed talk of a comeback.

"If I do come back," said Carlino, "I'm coming back as a heavyweight so I can make some real money."

Barnstable police made two arrests and used mace to subdue some of the miscreants. Rivera has offered Diggs a rematch—in Worcester.

—Jay Miller

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



While contemporary fight fans are blessed with a wide selection of boxing literature on the gloved era, there is a comparative dearth of material dealing exclusively with the bareknuckle period. A happy effort to remedy the situation is *Bare Fists* (Lodge Farm Books, 230 pages, £15, hard cover) by British boxing writer Bob Mee.

Mee traces pugilism from the late-17th century England across the Atlantic Ocean to the rough-and-tumble reign of John L. Sullivan, who was the bridge between the bareknuckle and gloved generations, having won the heavyweight title in both disciplines. Mee writes in a straight-forward, easy to read style, and paints a rich, historically accurate picture of the world of boxing prior to the advent of the Marquess of Queensberry rules, with special emphasis on the stars of the epoch: James Figg, Jack Broughton, Daniel Mendoza, Tom Cribb, and Tom Molineaux.

Mee pays special attention to the 1860 bout between John Heenan, champion of America, and British titlist Tom Sayers, the first attempt to crown an undisputed world champion. A colorful blow-by-blow account of their inconclusive 42-round battle brings the reader all the atmosphere of mid-19th century England, complete with behind the scenes intrigue, including Heenan's tormented relationship with his wife, the controversial actress Adah Issacs Menken.

For the knowledge contained and its ability to take readers back to a world that no longer exists, *Bare Fists* is a worthy addition to any boxing library.

—Alan Shelton

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
7-16-99	Mickey Ward KO 5 Jermal Corbin	ESPN2	jw	C+	B+	C
Ward finally wins one that counts; loss in big fight right around the corner						
7-16-99	John-John Molina W 10 James Crayton	FX	l	C	C+	C+
Molina can still get it done against anyone outside the top 10						
7-16-99	**David Reid W 12 Kevin Kelly**	**FX**	**WBA jm**	**B+**	**C-**	**C**
Never mind the eyelid; Reid's got to work on that droopy offense						
7-17-99	David Tua KO 1 Gary Bell	HBO	h	B+	D	B
Tua devastating; this is what we like to see in our young heavyweights						
7-17-99	**Fernando Vargas KO 11 Raul Marquez**	**HBO**	**IBF jm**	**A-**	**B**	**B+**
Vargas near perfect in one-sided beating; Marquez outclassed from opening bell						
7-23-99	David Telesco KO 5 Hector Sanjurjo	ESPN2	lh	C+	D	C-
If the surviving member of Milli Vanilli stepped in for Telesco, would anyone notice?						
7-24-99	**Terronn Millett KO 12 Virgil McClendon**	**Show**	**IBF jw**	**B-**	**C-**	**B+**
Unknown challenger keeps it interesting early, but fades down the stretch						
7-24-99	**James Page KO 11 Freddie Pendleton**	**Show**	**WBA w**	**C+**	**D-**	**B**
Who's teaching Page how to slip right hands, Shannon Briggs?						
7-25-99	Ed Mahone KO 10 Derrick Banks	FOXSN	h	D	C+	C-
Mahone scores seven knockdowns, adds another trialhorse to record						
7-30-99	James Toney KO 10 Adolpho Washington	ESPN2	c	C+	C+	B-
If this was any indication, rumors of Toney's demise have been greatly exaggerated						
7-31-99	Fernando Zuniga KO 1 Reginaldo Andrade	PPV	sm	D	C+	C
Zuniga impressive in win, but should be arrested for calling himself Muhammad Ali Jr.						
7-31-99	Diego Morales KO 8 Ysaias Zamudio	PPV	jb	B-	B-	B
Erik's little brother sizzles in one-sided drubbing of veteran Zamudio						
7-31-99	Butterbean KO 2 Tim Burgoon	PPV	h	F	F	F
Think Butterbean will wake up one day when he's 40 and wonder if he ever could have been a real fighter?						
7-31-99	Michael Carbajal KO 11 Jorge Arce	PPV	jfl	B-	A-	A
If he never wins another big fight, Carbajal will always have this gem to look back on						
7-31-99	**Erik Morales KO 6 Reynante Jamili**	**PPV**	**WBC jf**	**A**	**C**	**B**
Morales' power and speed too much for Filipino challenger						
8-6-99	Eric Morel KO 1 Francisco Espitia	ESPN2	jb	B	C-	B-
Future champ Morel sparkles in blowout; title shot looms						
8-7-99	Omar Sheika KO 8 Kevin Pompey	PPV	sm	C+	F	B+
Pompey a decent welter during the Hoover administration; when will Sheika step up?						
8-7-99	Marco Antonio Barrera W 12 Pastor Maurin	PPV	jf	B+	D-	F
Snoozer because of Maurin's style; the bigger issue for Barrera is what's up with that Skipper Kelp hair-do?						
8-7-99	Frans Botha D 10 Shannon Briggs	PPV	h	B+	A	A-
Who could have guessed this one would be so much fun? We'd love a rematch						
8-8-99	Rafael Ruelas W 10 Hicklet Lau	FOXSN	jw	D	C-	D
Ruelas struggles to get split nod over mediocre Lau; it's time to call it quits						
8-9-99	Guty Espadas KO 1 Prangky Mamuaya	FOXSN	f	C	D+	C
Espadas takes care of late substitute with bodyshots, wins 10th straight						

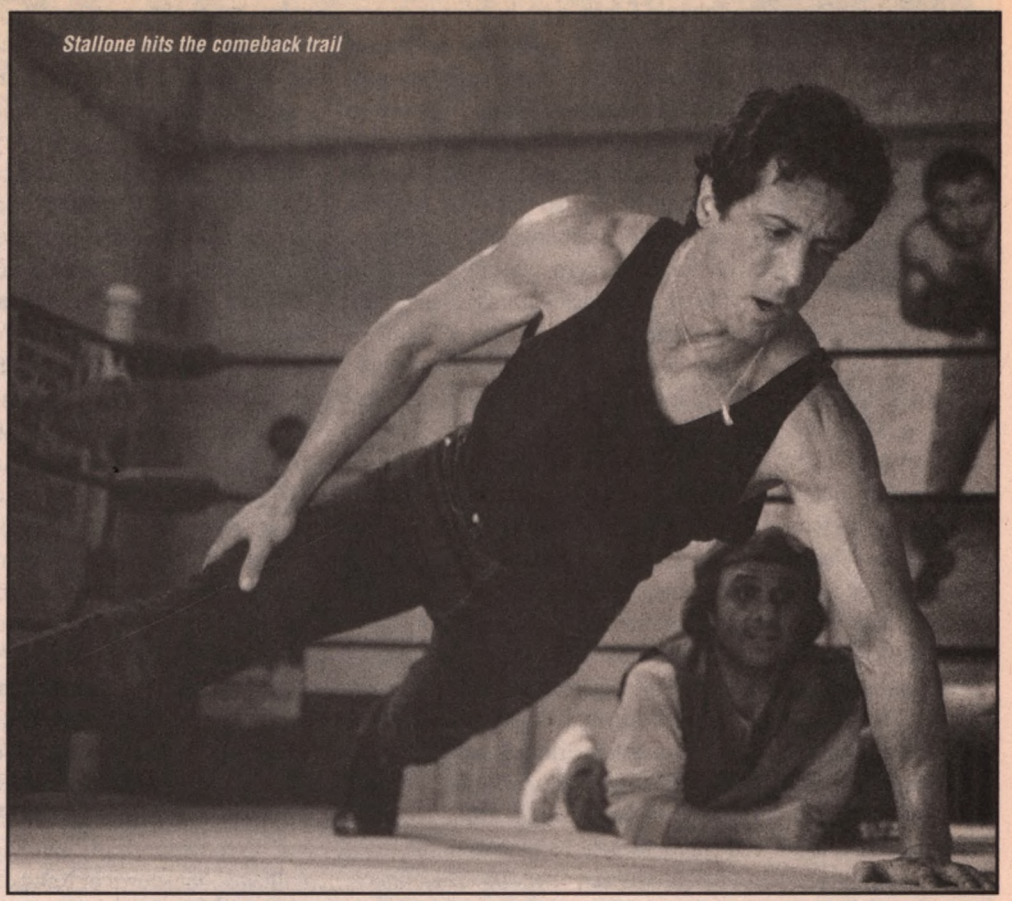
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN–Fox SportsNet; Uni–Univision

ANOTHER COMEBACK


Stallone hits the comeback trail

Perhaps inspired by the geriatric bumblings of Larry Holmes and Bonecrusher Smith, 53-year-old Sylvester Stallone is going into training for *Rocky VI*. It's been more than nine years since the most recent cinematic adventure of Rocky Balboa, who was last seen beating the Philly cheese steaks out of Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*. Most people figured that would be the last of the series, but the MGM studio has confirmed that it is planning a sixth installment.

The original *Rocky*, which won a Best Picture Oscar in 1976 and made Stallone a superstar, is widely considered the best of the series, but each ensuing episode has grown progressively worse. In an attempt to regain the flavor and style that made the original film such a critical success (they've all done boffo business at the box office), Stallone plans to write, direct, and star in this one—and take a cut in pay! According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, the budget for *Rocky VI* is only $30-million, a mere pittance by today's standards, which means that Stallone won't be getting his usual $20-million salary.

The script is still being written, so no word on who the villain will be this time. Let's just hope it isn't Butterbean.

LITTLE'S BIGGEST FIGHT

We often hear about how a figurative "swift kick in the ass" inspires someone to turn his life around. But for former WBA super middleweight champion Steve Little, it was a *literal* kick in the ass that may have *saved* his life. While Little, 34, was in Denmark training heavyweight Brian Nielsen in February of this year, the then-undefeated Dane playfully kicked Little in the rear, and the subsequent abnormal pain led Little to have some tests done. The diagnosis was colon cancer. But thanks to Nielsen's antics, it may have been caught in time for Little to win the most important fight he's ever been in.

Photo by Jay Lash

Things are looking up for Little in his battle with cancer

Little, who upset Michael Nunn for the WBA belt in '94, but lost it to Frankie Liles in his first defense six months later, underwent eight weeks of nightmarish chemotherapy, spent three weeks recovering, and then started up again in early-July.

"The treatments are worse than the cancer," Little told THE RING from his home in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania. "I can't eat, everything tastes like metal, I'm nauseous all the time. I'm not the same person. Sometimes I'm totally out of it for two or three days at a time. I'll talk to someone, and not even know afterward that I talked to them."

Nearly broke in addition to his physical misery, Little finally got some good news three weeks into the second round of treatments.

"It looks like the tumor is shrinking," he said, his voice faint, but full of hope. "Probably in three or four weeks, they can remove it. And then I'm on the path to recovery."

But at the same time, the medical bills are continuing to pile up for the gutsy ex-champion. Anyone wishing to help out Little, his wife, and their six children can send contributions to The Steve Little Trust Fund, c/o Berks County Bank, P.O. Box 1097, Reading, PA 19603.

—Eric Raskin

OUTSIDE THE ROPES

Hazzard: Gender bias charge

Two-division former champion **Johnny Tapia**, who blamed then-promoter Top Rank for his decision loss to **Paulie Ayala** in June, signed up with British promoter **Frank Warren** in July, his third different promoter in a span of six months. The union with Warren makes an eventual meeting with junior featherweight star **Marco Antonio Barrera** a strong possibility, though a rematch with Ayala may happen first ... Though only 23 years of age, former WBA super featherweight champ **Takanori Hatakeyama** announced his retirement following his June title defeat to **Lakva Sim** in Tokyo. Hatakeyama, 22-1-2 (17), made one successful defense of the title he won from **Yong Soo Choi** in '98 ... The **Muhammad Ali** Boxing Reform Act, which Arizona Senator **John McCain** has been pushing through Congress since mid-'98, was approved by the Senate in late-July. A companion bill was still working its way through the House of Representatives as of press time ... Popular British contender **Chris Eubank** was accused of kicking a taxi in England in mid-July when the cab failed to stop after Eubank had thought he'd flagged it down. Eubank caused about £200 of damage to the cab and may face criminal prosecution ... Former European lightweight champion **Rene Weller**, 45, was sentenced to seven years in jail in mid-July for selling cocaine. He was said to have sold approximately 33 pounds of the drug, with a street value of $390,000, between 1992-'98. The crime is punishable with a sentence of up to 15 years, but Weller was let off easier for admitting his guilt ... Two female boxing officials, judge **Lynne Carter** and referee **Velma Garrick**, recently filed suit against the New Jersey State Athletic Control Board and commissioner **Larry Hazzard**, accusing Hazzard of gender bias when he declined to renew Carter's license in '97 and would not grant Garrick a license in '96. The suit asks for damages exceeding $75,000 ... There are several boxing deaths to report this month: Former WBA 130-pound champ **Alfredo Layne**, who kayoed **Wilfredo Gomez** for the title in '86, only to lose it later that year to **Brian Mitchell**, was shot and killed by robbers outside his home in Panama City in late-June. Layne, 15-12 (12), was 39 years old. In mid-July, former European heavyweight champion **Dick Richardson**, often called "Britain's Marciano," died at the age of 65. Richardson's 31-14-2 (22) career included fights with **Ezzard Charles**, **Willie Pastrano**, **Cleveland Williams**, **Henry Cooper**, and **Ingemar Johannson**. And lastly, 30-year-old heavyweight **Al Williams** died of a sudden heart attack in Las Vegas in late-June, shortly before he was set to sign a promotional contract with **Cedric Kushner**. Williams, 17-1-2 (13), was a sparring partner of both **Mike Tyson** and **Lennox Lewis**, and Tyson reportedly paid for the body to be returned to Williams' hometown of Newport News, Virginia, for the funeral.

Richardson: Dead at age 65

THE PUNCHLINES

"I'm credible, I'm clean, and I can win the world title again."

—Trevor Berbick, after capturing an eight-round decision win over Iran Barkley in late-June

"Why couldn't Pops fight me? A match like that would make history. Who wouldn't buy it?"

—Hector Camacho Jr., on fighting his father

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended August 10, 1999)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
3. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Welterweight
4. **SHANE MOSLEY** Welterweight
5. **MARK JOHNSON** Junior Bantamweight
6. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** Junior Lightweight
7. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Strawweight
8. **ERIK MORALES** Junior Featherweight
9. **NASEEM HAMED** Featherweight
10. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Middleweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Staying busy is vital to retaining a high ranking. Therefore, David Tua, who bombed out Gary Bell in less than one round, moves ahead of inactive Mike Tyson and into the fifth position. Tyson, scheduled to return to action October 2, trades places with the Samoan slugger and is now sixth.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: WBC champ Juan Carlos Gomez, who stopped Bruce Scott for his fifth defense of the belt, also advances due to greater activity. The Germany-based Cuban, formerly number two, replaces dormant Fabrice Tiozzo, who hasn't fought since November 1998, at the top spot. The WBA titlist slips to second.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Both Ryan Rhodes (number seven last issue) and Robert Allen (formerly number 10) exit after suffering emphatic knockout defeats. Jason Matthews, who blasted out Rhodes in the second round, debuts at number nine, and comebacking Canadian Davey Hilton is aboard for the first time in years, holding down the 10th spot. The reshuffling also means that Julio Cesar Green (eighth last issue) and Robert McCracken (previously number nine) each take one step up and are now seventh and eighth, respectively.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Everything's on hold until after De La Hoya-Trinidad, September 18.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Two issues ago we installed former IBF lightweight champion Shane Mosley in the second slot, but since then, Team Mosley has advised us that Sugar Shane will be jumping all the way to welterweight without fighting at 140 pounds. Consequently, Mosley is gone. His first opponent at 147 pounds is scheduled to be THE RING's number-10 welter, Wilfredo Rivera. We'll find a spot for Mosley among the welterweights if and when he beats Rivera. Back in at number 10 this issue is Reggie Green, who was dropped to make room for Mosley. Everybody else who was ranked below Mosley last issue is bumped up a notch.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Julien Lorcy didn't last long as WBA champ, losing the crown to Stefano Zoff in his first defense. Zoff debuts at number six, while Lorcy tumbles from third to eighth. This pushes Cesar Bazan, Israel Cardona, and Ivan Robinson up one spot each. Jean-Baptiste Mendy, ninth last issue, departs due to the fact that he'd previously lost the WBA belt to Lorcy.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Acelino Freitas' first-round blitz of Anatoly Alexandrov results in Alexandrov (formerly sixth) being ousted and Freitas being installed in his old position.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Japan's Hideki Todaka enters at number three on the strength of his 12-round points win over Jesus Rojas, which also earned him the WBA title. As it was a fairly close decision, Rojas (third last issue) only falls to fourth. Although he shows considerable promise, Diego Morales (previously 10th) drops out to make room for Todaka. But we have a hunch that he'll be back.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Michael Carbajal's dramatic, come-from-behind, 11th-round TKO of Jorge Arce was good enough for the former champion to climb back into the rankings at number eight. Arce, who previously held that position, sags to ninth. Yeosam Choi (10th last issue) leaves to accommodate Carbajal's return to the rankings.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: While Naseem Hamed remains idle and continues to avoid tough opponents, WBC super bantamweight champ Erik Morales stays busy against respectable opposition. Therefore, Morales changes places with Naz, and now occupies the eighth position. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended August 10, 1999

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

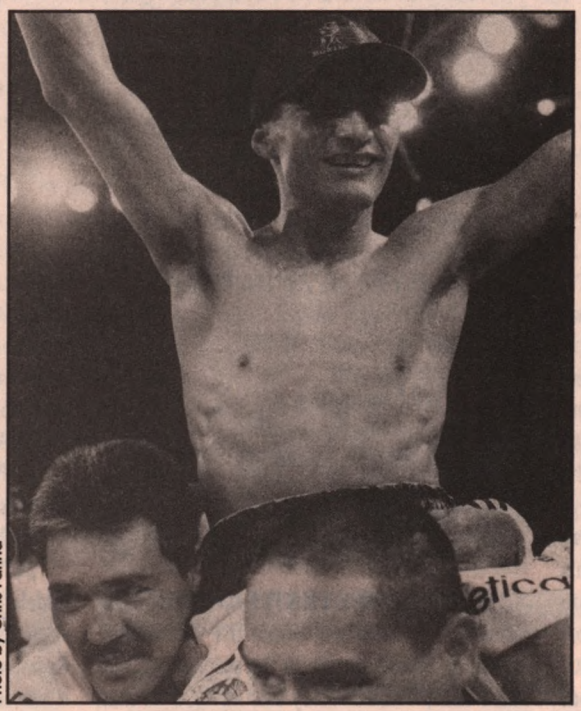


Photo by Chris Farina

Erik Morales rose a spot in the pound-for-pound ratings with his win over Reynante Jamili

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *34-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *36-3-1 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE IBEABUCHI** Dallas, TX *20-0*
4. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *30-0*
5. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *34-1*
6. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *46-3*
7. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *34-3*
8. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD *31-1*
9. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *28-1*
10. **KIRK JOHNSON** Canada *27-0-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** Germany *28-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FABRICE TIOZZO** France *40-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **VASSILIY JIROV** Kazakhstan *21-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **JOHNNY NELSON** England *33-12-1*
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** Argentina *26-3-1*
6. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS** Las Vegas, NV *30-5-1*
7. **IMAMU MAYFIELD** New Brunswick, NJ *19-2*
8. **SAUL MONTANA** Mexico *33-6*
9. **KENNY KEENE** Emmett, ID *46-3*
10. **CARL THOMPSON** England *24-5*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *40-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany *40-0*
3. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI** Germany *40-4-1*
4. **LOU DEL VALLE** Bronx, NY *28-2*
5. **REGGIE JOHNSON** Houston, TX *39-6-1*
6. **MICHAEL NUNN** Davenport, IA *54-4*
7. **ERIC HARDING** Philadephia, PA *16-0-1*
8. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL *38-2*
9. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL *13-0*
10. **DAVID TELESCO** Port Chester, NY *22-2*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JOE CALZAGHE** Wales *27-0*
2. **RICHIE WOODHALL** England *25-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **SVEN OTTKE** Germany *15-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **BYRON MITCHELL** Ozark, AL *20-0 (WBA Champ)*
5. **CHARLES BREWER** Philadelphia, PA *33-6*
6. **THOMAS TATE** Houston, TX *36-5*
7. **FRANKIE LILES** N. Hollywood, CA *32-2*
8. **ROBIN REID** England *26-2-1*
9. **MADS LARSEN** Denmark *29-1*
10. **VINNY PAZIENZA** Cranston, RI *46-7*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA *35-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. *27-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **KEITH HOLMES** Washington, D.C. *33-2 (WBC Champ)*
4. **HASSINE CHERIFI** France *27-3-1*
5. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** Davenport, IA *22-2-1*
6. **OTIS GRANT** Canada *31-2-1*
7. **JULIO CESAR GREEN** Brooklyn, NY *25-3*
8. **ROBERT McCRACKEN** England *33-0*
9. **JASON MATTHEWS** England *21-1*
10. **DAVEY HILTON** Canada *37-1-3*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. FERNANDO VARGAS — Oxnard, CA 17-0 (IBF Champ)
2. DAVID REID — Philadelphia, PA 13-0 (WBA Champ)
3. LAURENT BOUDOUANI — France 38-3-1
4. FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO — Spain 45-4 (WBC Champ)
5. HARRY SIMON — Namibia 18-0
6. KEITH MULLINGS — Brooklyn, NY 16-5-1
7. YORY BOY CAMPAS — Mexico 73-3
8. WINKY WRIGHT — St. Petersburg, FL 39-2
9. BRONCO McKART — Monroe, MI 37-2
10. TONY MARSHALL — Albany, NY 32-7-6

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. OSCAR DE LA HOYA — Whittier, CA 31-0 (WBC Champ)
2. FELIX TRINIDAD — Puerto Rico 35-0 (IBF Champ)
3. IKE QUARTEY — Ghana 34-1-1
4. JAMES PAGE — Pittsburg, CA 25-3 (WBA Champ)
5. PERNELL WHITAKER — Norfolk, VA 41-3-1
6. JOSE LUIS LOPEZ — Mexico 42-4-2
7. OBA CARR — Detroit, MI 48-3-1
8. VERNON FORREST — Atlanta, GA 29-0
9. SHANNAN TAYLOR — Australia 25-0-1
10. WILFREDO RIVERA — Puerto Rico 29-3-1

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. SHARMBA MITCHELL — Washington, D.C. 45-2 (WBA Champ)
2. TERRONN MILLETT — St. Louis, MO 22-1-1 (IBF Champ)
3. KOSTYA TSZYU — Australia 22-1-1
4. MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ — Mexico 43-1-1
5. ZAB JUDAH — Brooklyn, NY 21-0
6. VINCE PHILLIPS — Las Vegas, NV 39-4
7. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ — Mexico 102-3-2
8. ANTONIO DIAZ — Coachella, CA 27-2
9. RANDALL BAILEY — Miami, FL 19-0
10. REGGIE GREEN — Clinton, MD 29-3

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. STEVE JOHNSTON — Denver, CO 27-1 (WBC Champ)
2. ANGEL MANFREDY — Gary, IN 28-3-1
3. CESAR BAZAN — Mexico 34-3-1
4. ISRAEL CARDONA — Hartford, CT 31-2
5. IVAN ROBINSON — Philadelphia, PA 27-3
6. STEFANO ZOFF — Italy 28-6-2 (WBA Champ)
7. ARTURO GATTI — Jersey City, NJ 29-4
8. JULIEN LORCY — France 41-1-2
9. COLIN DUNNE — England 29-1
10. ARTUR GRIGORIJAN — Uzbekistan 26-0

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. FLOYD MAYWEATHER — Grand Rapids, MI 21-0 (WBC Champ)
2. ROBERTO GARCIA — Oxnard, CA 32-0 (IBF Champ)
3. LAKVA SIM — Mongolia 11-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. YONG SOO CHOI — South Korea 25-3-1
5. JESUS CHAVEZ — Austin, TX 27-1
6. ACELINO FREITAS — Brazil 21-0
7. GOYO VARGAS — Mexico 39-6-1
8. DIEGO CORRALES — Sacramento, CA 28-0
9. JOHN BROWN — Atlantic City, NJ 19-6
10. JOEL CASAMAYOR — Miami, FL 18-0

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. NASEEM HAMED — England 32-0
2. FRED NORWOOD — St. Louis, MO 34-0-1 (WBA Champ)
3. CESAR SOTO — Mexico 53-7-2 (WBC Champ)
4. VUYANI BUNGU — South Africa 37-2
5. LUISITO ESPINOSA — Philippines 44-8
6. DERRICK GAINER — Pensacola, FL 29-4
7. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ — Mexico 29-1
8. MANUEL MEDINA — Mexico 56-10 (IBF Champ)
9. ANTONIO CERMENO — Venezuela 33-3
10. ANGEL VAZQUEZ — Hartford, CT 17-0

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. ERIK MORALES — Mexico 34-0 (WBC Champ)
2. MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA — Mexico 49-2
3. NESTOR GARZA — Mexico 36-1 (WBA Champ)
4. LEHLO LEDWABA — South Africa 28-1-1 (IBF Champ)
5. WAYNE McCULLOUGH — Las Vegas, NV 22-2
6. KENNEDY McKINNEY — Memphis, TN 33-4-1
7. ENRIQUE SANCHEZ — Mexico 25-1-1
8. MBULELO BOTILE — South Africa 24-1
9. CARLOS NAVARRO — Los Angeles, CA 19-0
10. JUAN CARLOS RAMIREZ — Mexico 17-2

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. TIM AUSTIN — Cincinnati, OH 19-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. PAULIE AYALA — Ft. Worth, TX 28-1 (WBA Champ)
3. JOHNNY TAPIA — Albuquerque, NM 46-1-2
4. VEERAPOL SAHAPROM — Thailand 22-1 (WBC Champ)
5. NANA KONADU — Ghana 40-4-1
6. JORGE ELIECER JULIO — Colombia 41-1
7. JULIO GAMBOA — Nicaragua 24-4
8. JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI — Japan 17-5-1
9. ADAN VARGAS — Mexico 31-1-1
10. DARIO AZUAGA — Paraguay 44-0-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. MARK JOHNSON — Washington, D.C. 37-1 (IBF Champ)
2. IN JOO CHO — South Korea 15-0 (WBC Champ)
3. HIDEKI TODAKA — Japan 15-2-1 (WBA Champ)
4. JESUS ROJAS — Venezuela 32-7-3
5. GERRY PENALOSA — Philippines 40-2-2
6. YOKTHAI SITHOAR — Thailand 18-1-1
7. LUIS BOLANO — Colombia 31-0
8. RATANACHAI VORAPIN — Thailand 35-4
9. JOEL LUNA-ZARATE — Mexico 32-3-2
10. ERIC MOREL — Madison, WI 21-0

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. MANNY PACQUIAO — Philippines 25-1 (WBC Champ)
2. LEO GAMEZ — Venezuela 32-6-1 (WBA Champ)
3. MAURICIO PASTRANA — Colombia 21-0
4. CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM — Thailand 34-2
5. IRENE PACHECO — Colombia 22-0 (IBF Champ)
6. HUGO SOTO — Argentina 50-6-2
7. JOSE BONILLA — Venezuela 25-5
8. SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT — Thailand 33-1
9. ALEJANDRO MONTIEL — Mexico 39-3
10. DAVID GUERAULT — France 15-0

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. SAMAN SORJATURONG — Thailand 40-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. ROSENDO ALVAREZ — Nicaragua 25-1-1
3. PICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT — Thailand 21-1 (WBA Champ)
4. WILL GRIGSBY — St. Paul, MN 14-1-1 (IBF Champ)
5. BABY JAKE MATLALA — South Africa 50-10-2
6. MELCHOR COB CASTRO — Mexico 55-6-4
7. JOMA GAMBOA — Philippines 25-4-1
8. MICHAEL CARBAJAL — Phoenix, AZ 49-4
9. JORGE ARCE — Mexico 20-3-1
10. JOSE SANJUANELO — Colombia 12-0

STRAWWEIGHT
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. RICARDO LOPEZ — Mexico 47-0-1 (WBC/WBA Champ)
2. ZOLANI PETELO — South Africa 14-2-2 (IBF Champ)
3. WANDEE CHOR CHAREON — Thailand 23-3
4. CHANA PORPAOIN — Thailand 38-1
5. SONGKRAM PORPAOIN — Thailand 20-2-1
6. ROCKY LIN — Philippines 26-2
7. JOSE AGUIRRE — Mexico 20-1-1
8. KERMIN GUARDIA — Columbia 31-2
9. ANDY TABANAS — Philippines 35-3-1
10. OSWALDO GUERRERO — Mexico 26-4

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Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

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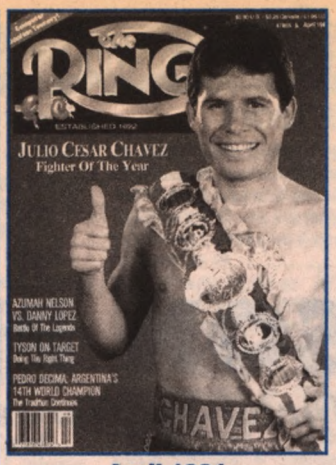

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☐Feb/85	☐Nov/87	☐Oct/90	☐Apr/93	☐Aug/96	☐Hol/98
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NEW FACES

JASON PIRES

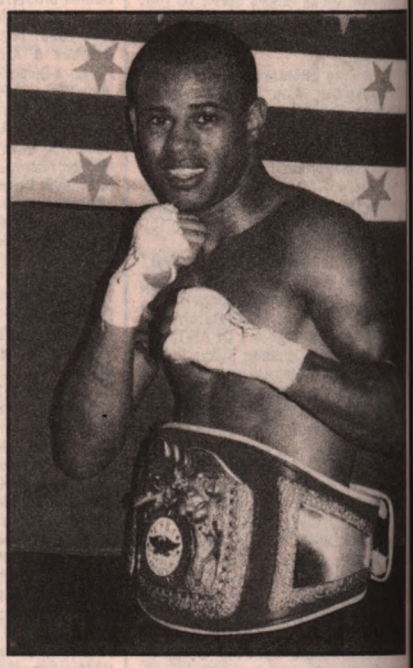
Junior Featherweight

By Joe Santoliquito

Jason Pires was at a crossroads. Sitting alone in his room, he could still hear his father's voice as he sat there peering ahead at an uncertain future. Quitting was never part of the boxing equation for Pires. If it snowed, on went the combat boots to trudge through the curbside slush. *Work harder than the other guy*, his father used to implore. Pires thought about what he would do next ...

Pires, 25, would love to see the look on his father's face today. The work ethic his father instilled has been the basis of the 5'8" junior featherweight's 15-0 (7) start to his pro career. If only his father could see him succeed. Allan Pires Sr. died of leukemia in 1996, the afternoon Jason was preparing to compete in a tournament that enabled him to advance to the 1996 Olympic Trials.

"I was the one that had to tell him," recalled Bucky Vincent, Pires' trainer, who also used to train Pires' father years earlier.



"It wasn't easy. Jason was going to box that night, and I got the call in the afternoon. I didn't want to tell him before the fight, that would have cut him all up. I don't think he would have been able to box. After the funeral, I told him to take a few days off."

But what Vincent didn't realize was that those few days nearly stretched into a full-fledged decision to quit the sport. It was a secret Pires kept to himself, something his father, if he were alive, would never have understood. Pires was thinking strongly about dropping boxing after his father's death. He figured he had college to fall back on, and a real job in his future.

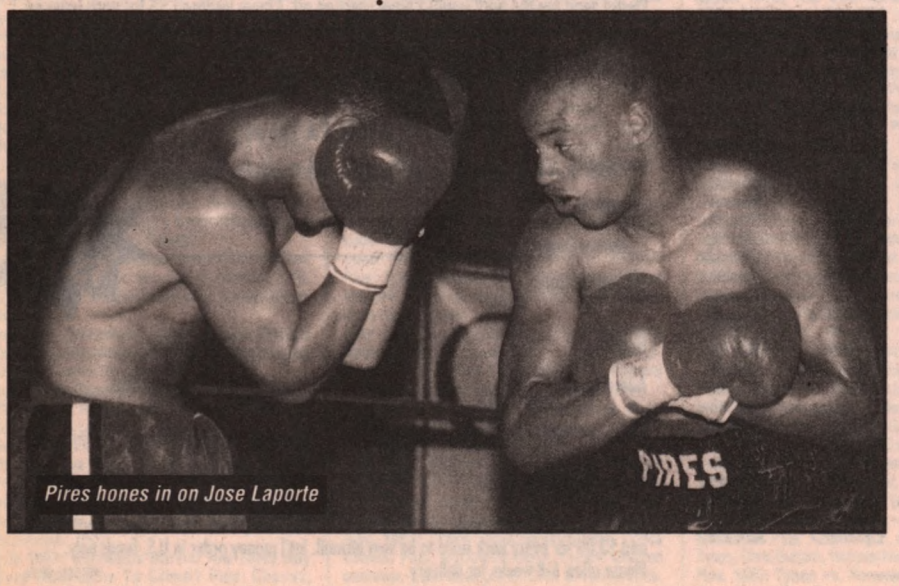
Boxing, going to school, it all piled up on Pires. At that stage in his life, his responsibilities were on the verge of overwhelming him. Sitting there in his room, he waged an

(Continued on page 61)

PRO RECORD

1996		
Oct. 11	Adan Aviles, Boston	KO 2
Nov. 29	Oscar Cruz, Providence, RI	KO 3
1997		
March 13	Marco Sies, Providence	KO 3
April 15	Alex Kraizman, Newark, NJ	KO 4
June 26	Jose Laporte, Providence	W 4
Sept. 25	Robert Landetta, Providence	KO 1
Nov. 26	Adam Salas, Providence	W 6
1998		
March 27	Manuel Santiago, Boston	W 6
May 1	Domenick Monaco, Boston	KO 6
June 5	Joseph Figueroa, Boston	W 8
June 26	Mario Diaz, Dorraville, GA	W 10
Aug. 22	Andres Fernandez, Fitchburg, MA	KO 1
Dec. 12	Arturo Estrada, Stone Mountain, GA	W 8
1999		
Jan. 29	Arturo Estrada, St. Louis	Tech. Win 10
April 10	Tsogtjargal Erdenetsogt, Taunton, MA	W 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
15	15	0	0	7



Pires hones in on Jose Laporte

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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

FERNANDOMANIA

Considering all the machinery that's in place, is it any wonder that boxing is forever serv as an assembly line for controversial characters? Wimbledon makes its competitors we white. Boxing allows everything from loincloths to Liberace robes. The NFL forbids ref ees from talking to the press about disputed calls. The Sweet Science actually makes media stars its officials, something we're reminded of every time an ad for Mills Lane's TV show appears the side of a bus.

Golf broadcasters whisper. Fight broadcasters shout, sometimes—as has been the case wi George Foreman and Dan Dierdorf—directly the third man in the ring. In just about eve other sport, it's a no-no for an athlete to belit the opposition, to provide the enemy with a mot vational newspaper clipping to hang on the loc er room wall. In boxing, trash talk isn't consi ered poor sportsmanship or the foolish awake ing of a sleeping dog, it's simply called sell tickets.

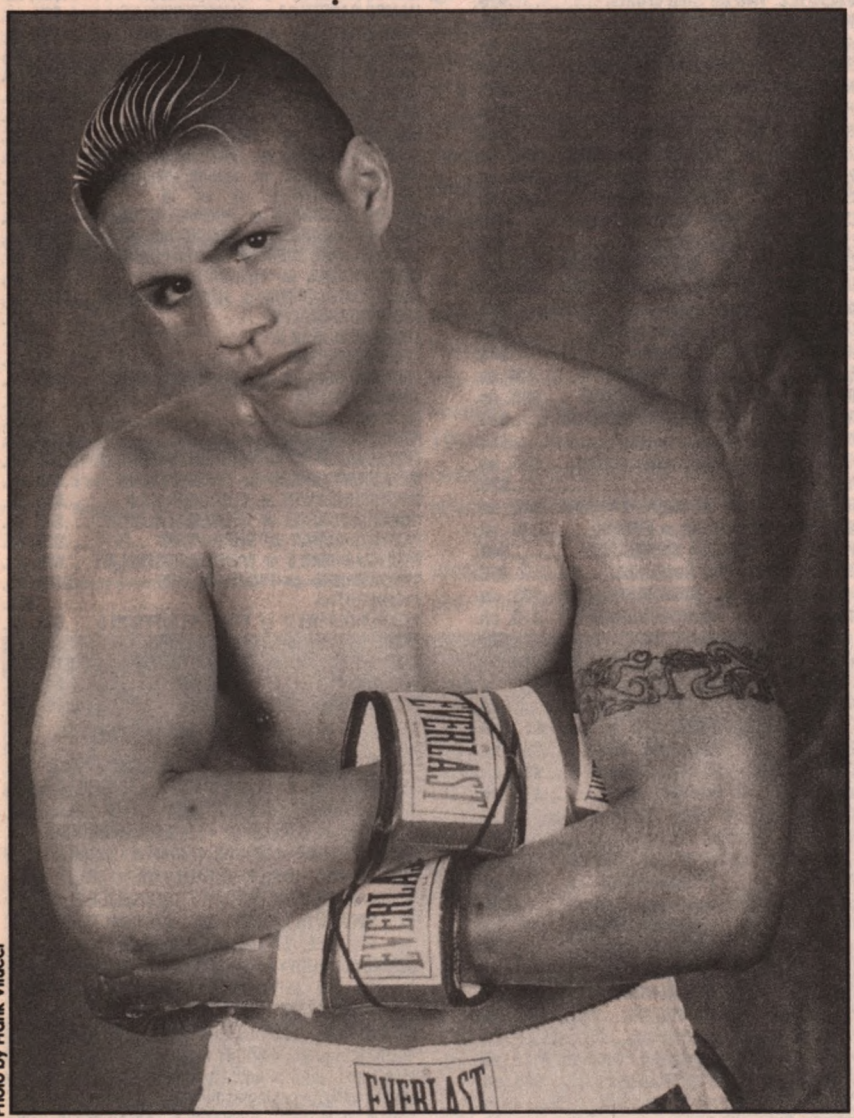


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Vargas: Part attitude, part aptitude

Which brings me to IBF junior middleweig champion "Ferocious" Fernando Vargas. Ju like his fellow Fab Four members—IBF ligh weight king Shane Mosley, WBC super feath weight titlist Floyd Mayweather, and WBA supe welterweight champion David Reid—Vargas is young, cocky, risk-taking belt-holder with a blu chip future. One thing, however, separates th 21-year-old Californian from the others: Aft only 17 fights and two-plus years as a pro, he clearly the most controversial.

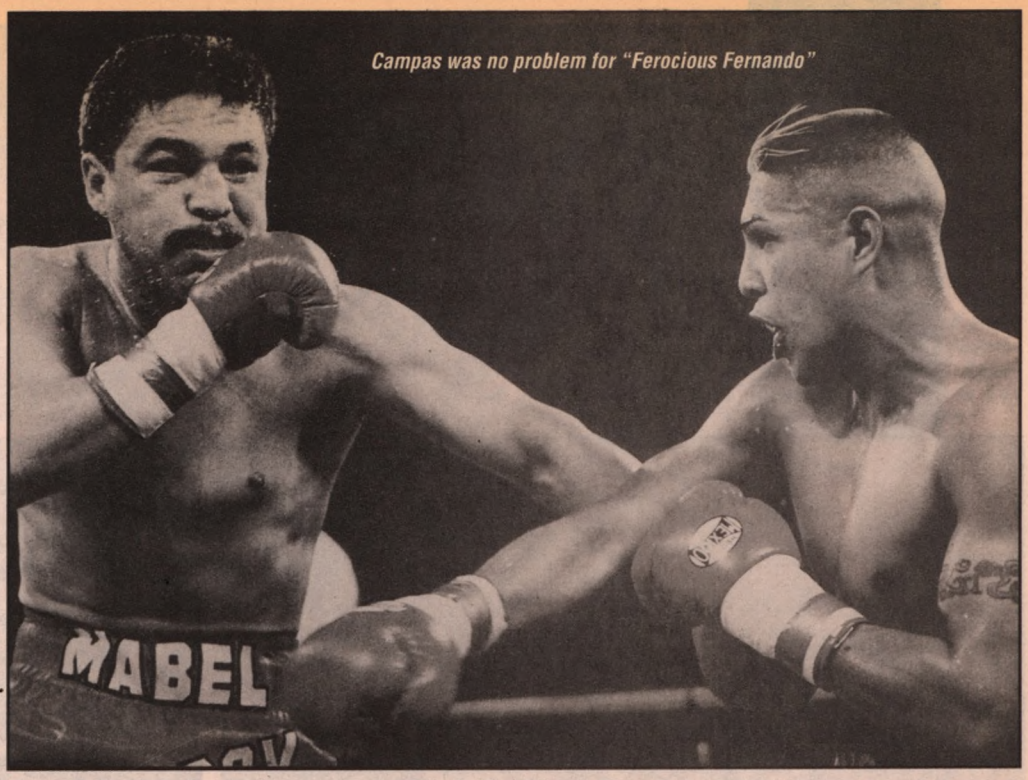
In a sport in which attitude sells, stirring pe ple's passions certainly isn't a bad thing. But can create as many enemies as fans. In the ca of Vargas, who is equal parts attitude and ap tude, it's not hard to imagine someone being bo a detractor and a supporter of his at the sam time.

To know the kid with the cockatiel hairdo to love him … and hate him. Let's start with th arrow through the heart.

The only thing he ducks is punches: An what a welcome change that is from so many today's promising talents who talk the talk an then baby-step the walk. With just 14 pro figh on his ledger, Vargas last year challenged 13 pound champion Yory Boy Campas, a veteran

14 bouts. Though several experts wondered if Vargas was being rushed, the kid became the youngest junior middleweight champion in history by forcing Campas to quit in his corner after the seventh round.

In his second defense, Vargas easily turned back a once-beaten former titlist, Raul Marquez. And Vargas is still hoping to defend his crown against former WBA welterweight king Ike Quartey, whose punching power doesn't usually put him high on any fighter's most-wanted list. Vargas has concluded, probably correctly, that speed, power, intelligence, the experience of 105 amateur bouts, and knockouts in all of his pro outings are good reasons for him to not fear anyone.



Campas was no problem for "Ferocious Fernando"

How brazen is he? Well, consider that ...

Vargas has the audacity to badmouth Oscar De La Hoya: That's right, *De La Hoya*, the Teflon superstar himself. Vargas acts as though he doesn't know that dissing "The Golden Boy" is a federal offense punishable by three years in prison and a $100,000 fine. Or maybe Vargas just doesn't care.

Though De La Hoya's accomplishments should undoubtedly earn him some slack from the press, what ought to be a benefit of the doubt has instead turned into a free ride. Had Felix Trinidad been as disappointing against Pernell Whitaker as De La Hoya was, or struggled so much to beat Quartey, he would have been filleted in print. Had Vinny Pazienza made the same racially insensitive comments De La Hoya uttered before his clash with Whitaker in '97, Paz would still be getting ripped.

Other fighters have called for De La Hoya, but they've done so respectfully and with their primary motivation being the purse such a matchup would bring. Vargas, however, gives the impression that the money is secondary and that his prime motivation is getting the opportunity to slap that smile off De La Hoya's face. A smile that's probably the only one in the game with more wattage than Vargas'.

Vargas is a softie when he lets down his guard: He cried when the Campas fight was signed and after he won the belt, it's a treat to watch him interact with his son, Fernando Jr., and he arranged for a friend with cerebral palsy to attend the Campas bout as a birthday present. How can you hate a guy like that? How? Well, it's actually pretty easy when you consider ...

He's got more wiseguy in him than Vito Corleone: A lot of Vargas' act crosses the line from macho man to punk. Like his shoving Marquez during the weigh-in. Vargas supposedly has his sights set on the middleweight division next. Hey, Fernando, here's a word of warning: If you ever shove Bernard Hopkins like that, you might end up with part of the scale sticking out of your ear.

And about this dissing of De La Hoya. Sure, it's funny, but think about it: Who is Vargas to badmouth a proven warrior who's won titles in three weight classes, twice TKO'd Julio Cesar Chavez, beaten Quartey, and been a part of three of the sport's most important nights in the past three years? Vargas forgets that he's had only 17 fights, while De La Hoya has had that many just with his trainers! By the way, should anyone with Vargas' haircut be talking down anyone?

Trouble has a way of finding him: After a group of men forced their way into a California home in July and roughed up one of its occupants, Vargas was arrested on charges of assault with a deadly weapon, burglary, and conspiracy to commit a crime. Two years ago, Vargas engaged in an out-of-the-ring battle with a fighter named Carlos Martinez. Vargas' explanation for the brawl was that he was goaded until he lost his cool. Perhaps he'll have a good explanation for this summer's arrest. Perhaps not.

In any case, you have to wonder about a kid who, this early in his career, is already getting his name in the paper for the wrong reasons. Having traveled this route with too many other fighters before, my supplies of patience, sympathy, and understanding have run dry. Behaving one's self isn't *that* hard.

Vargas fights for the Duvas: The fight game had become a much more fun place in the last few years with the Duvas, boxing's First Family of Obnoxiousness, assuming a lower profile. How can you root for Ferocious Fernando, though, when a win for him is a victory and more money in the pockets of Dino Duva, Lou Duva, and all the other Duvas whose names, thank god, escape me at the moment? The more we see Vargas, the more we see the Duvas. That's kind of like getting to date Jennifer Aniston, but only under the condition that a bunch of Marilyn Manson fans serve as chaperones. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

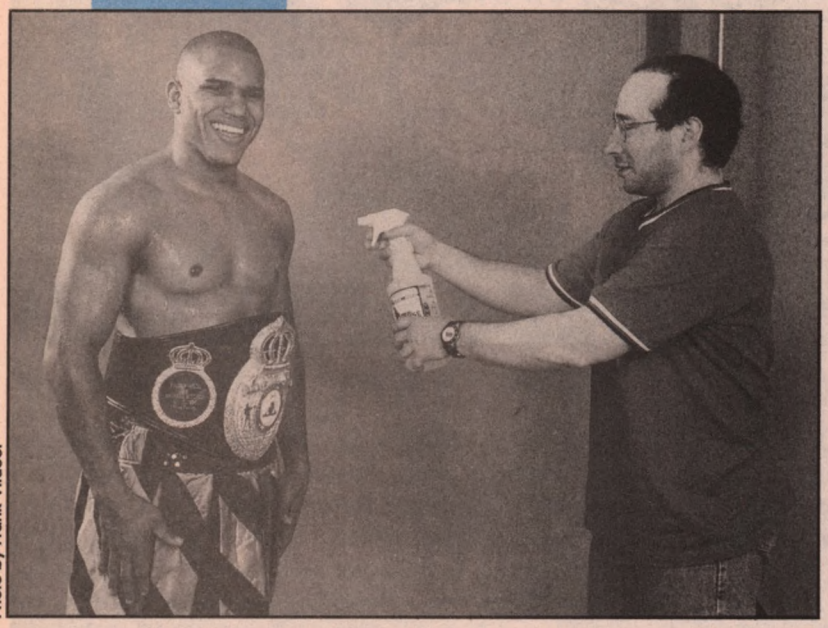


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Most readers don't realize that one of the many important responsibilities of being the associate editor of THE RING is wetting down the fighters during photo shoots. Here, WBA super lightweight champ Sharmba Mitchell gets a kick out of watching editor Joe Santoliquito show off his unparalleled spraying technique.

Virgil McClendon agreed to sell his soul for a shot at the IBF 140-pound title, but the devil got confused and tried to take his sole instead. McClendon overcame Lucifer's stumbling blocks with a roll of tape, but Terronn Millett's punching prowess proved to be the challenger's undoing.

Photo by Scott Romer

Butterbean was looking for a step up in competition after his farce against Peter McNeeley, but word is that this little girl has already been chosen as an upcoming Mike Tyson opponent instead.

Paulie Ayala got a kiss from Johnny Tapia at the conclusion of their stirring 12-round war in Las Vegas, but something tells us this smooch was a little more to the new bantam champ's liking. That's Ayala's wife, Leti, celebrating the win with him.

All-time greats Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns will gladly come together for a good cause ... especially if they know the lovely Holly Robinson-Peete is going to be there. The actress and the two ex-champions were among the many guests on hand at the 14th annual Cedars-Sinai Sports Spectacular held in Los Angeles in June.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

THE RING listened in on this conversation between Hector Camacho Jr. and some of the fellas in press row, and here's what was said. Camacho: "I'm so good, I'm going to make you all forget about my father." Press row: "We hope so."

It was rumored that a secret operative was sent into Brian Nielsen's dressing room by Dickie Ryan prior to Nielsen's upset TKO defeat, and here we see the proof. Apparently this woman over-massaged the Danish heavyweight into a near comatose state—and it still took journeyman Ryan 10 rounds to beat him.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Heavyweight brothers Buddy and Max Baer ran out of soil to transport around the fields, so they decided to fill the wheelbarrow full of Max instead. Both were training for upcoming fights in this photo from 1940.

Insiders' Analysis:

CAN ROY JONES CHOP DOWN THE BEST HEAVYWEIGHTS?

By Robert Mladinich

Whether or not undisputed light heavyweight champion Roy Jones will ever fight a top-rated heavyweight is anyone's guess, but every time he even muses out loud about it, he manages to generate an avalanche of headlines. Although the three-division titlist started his professional career as a middleweight in 1989, most industry insiders agree that he could beat nearly every lower-rung heavyweight in the business. But they are quick to opine that he would not fare nearly as well against the higher echelon fighters in the division.

A couple of years ago, Jones balked at what many observers believed to be a tremendous opportunity to not only earn $6-million dollars, but to also cultivate a formidable heavyweight persona by beating the shopworn Buster Douglas. When Jones turned down that opportunity after lobbying long and hard for it, he made non-believers out of many of his normally stalwart supporters who were convinced he would follow in the lofty footsteps of fellow light heavyweight champion Michael Spinks, who went on to win top heavy-

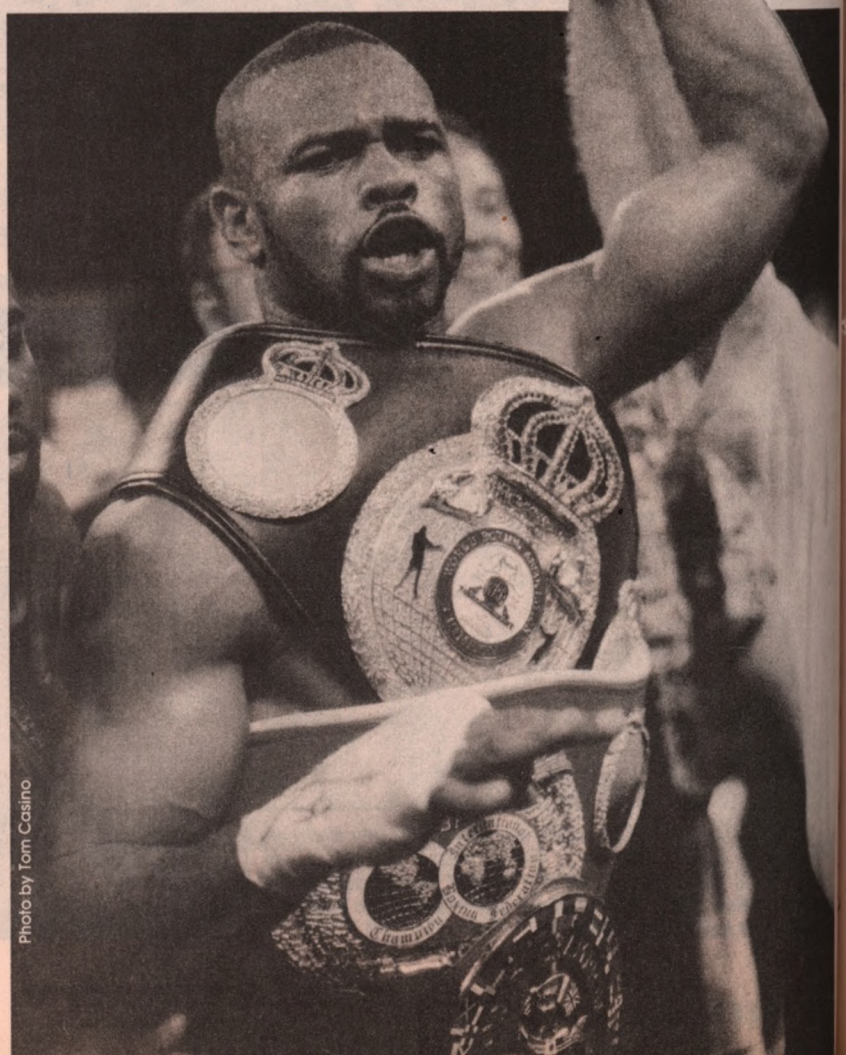
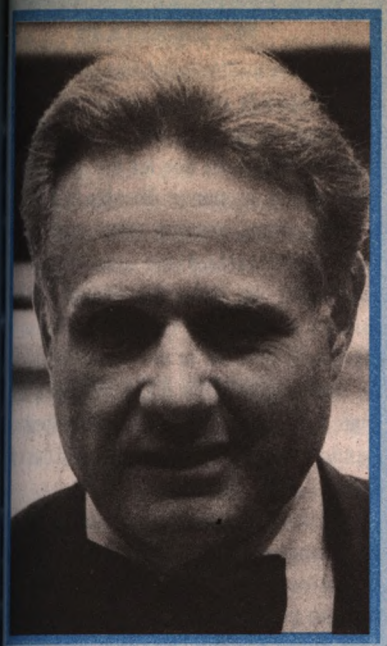
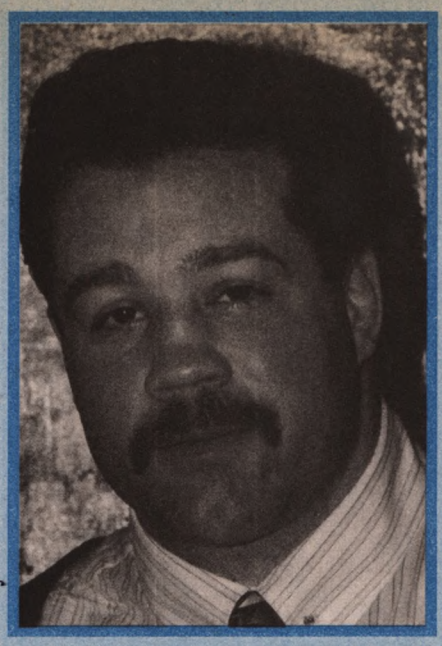
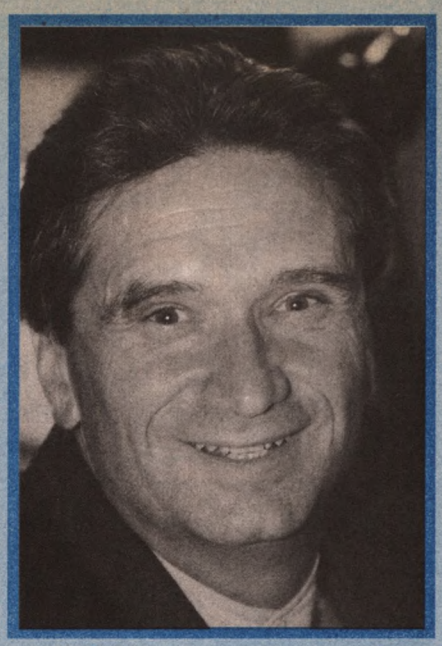


Photo by Tom Casino

Experts Larry Merchant, Bobby Czyz, and Dave Bontempo all envision great difficulty for Jones if he decides to test his skills against the heavyweight division's elite.

weight honors. Jones' reputation as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world was diminished a bit, and some wags even took to calling him the most reluctant fighter in the world, round-for-round.

Now that Jones has unified the light heavyweight division and seemingly run out of legitimate challengers, rumblings are once again emanating from his home base in Pensacola, Florida, that he is ready, willing, able, and eager to take on the big men. At 5'11", Jones could presumably weigh comfortably in the 200-pound range, but would still give away an incredible amount of height, reach, and weight to some of the goliaths of the division. While he could equalize some of those disadvantages with his blinding hand speed, which might be considerably slowed by adding an additional 25 pounds to his well-muscled frame, how he would get past the tentacle-like reaches of the 6'5" Lennox Lewis or the 6'7" Michael Grant is hard to fathom. THE RING *assembled a panel of three boxing insiders, all of whom have no hidden agenda or ax to grind with the mighty Jones, to get a feel for the prevailing wisdom regarding his prospects should he make the leap to heavyweight.*

Larry Merchant is a former boxing reporter who now serves as a commentator for HBO. Bobby Czyz is a former light heavyweight and cruiserweight world champion who provides commentary for Showtime. He began his career as a middleweight, like Jones, and ended it as a heavyweight. Dave Bontempo is a former newspaper columnist, who is currently an international television broadcaster. All three were asked to appraise Jones' chances against the 10 heavyweights ranked by THE RING. *They generally agreed that he would have the best chance of beating Chris Byrd, himself a blown-up middleweight, but the divergence of opinions regarding the rest of the division was most interesting.*

"The only two fighters [on THE RING'S *top-10 list] that Jones would have a serious chance of beating are Holyfield and Byrd," said Merchant. "Holyfield because he was a light heavyweight for part of his career, and Byrd for obvious reasons. Should Holyfield beat Lewis in their rematch, that fight makes the most economic sense. It's worth the risk to either fighter. If Jones won, he would own six unified belts. And there is a great curiosity factor."*

"Roy could do well with some of the better heavyweights, but he would have to ease into it," said Czyz. "If he goes after the top guys right away, he's in trouble. But if he starts slow and gradually increases the level of competition as he puts on the weight naturally, he would do okay. But some of those guys are just too big for him to handle at this juncture. A year or two down the road, maybe. But not right now."

"I think Jones' speed and fundamentals would enable him to beat just about everybody rated from 15 to 30, but the top-10 is a different story," said Bontempo. "If Roy wasn't willing to gamble with Reggie Johnson, I can't see him gambling against the better heavyweights. And to beat most of them, he would have to gamble."

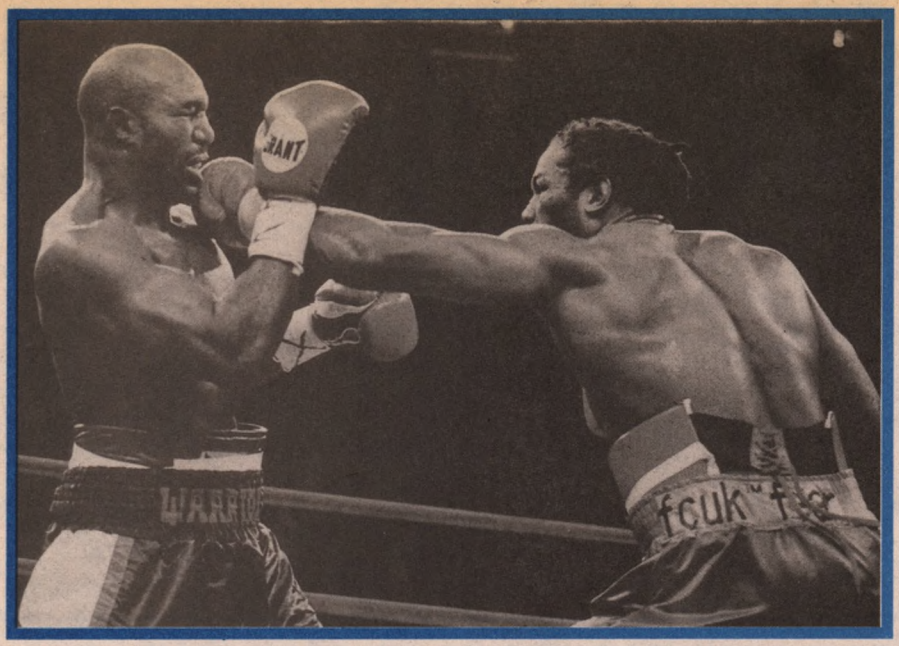
One thing is very clear: when it comes to the always compelling Jones, everybody has an opinion.

LENNOX LEWIS

Merchant: "Too big! Jones would have no chance whatsoever of beating him. He would have to do too much running, and would just wear himself out. Jones is a big middleweight who is good enough to beat the best light heavyweights in the world, but not big enough to fight the modern-day heavyweights. Most of them have real athletic skills, and are just too big and powerful for Jones. They are not the lumbering giants that they used to be. The only tantalizing thing about a fight with Lewis is how Jones would do, not whether or not he would win." **Pick: Lewis**

Czyz: "Roy cannot beat him, it's as simple as that. It's just too big of a jump for him. Even if he came up to 200 or 210 pounds, he would be giving away 40-50 pounds. I can't see Lennox being wary the way he was against Evander, and I think he would probably flatten Roy." **Pick: Lewis**

Bontempo: "I think Jones might have some moments against him, but would give



Lennox Lewis' tremendous jab would give Jones at least as much trouble as it did Evander Holyfield when they met in March. Both heavyweight champions would be favorites to beat Jones, but "The Real Deal" isn't nearly as overwhelming a choice as Lewis.

him so much respect that it would not be an entertaining fight. Lennox has so many physical advantages with his height and reach that Jones could conceivably never get near him. I would give Lennox a good chance to stop him, but think he would probably win a very convincing decision." **Pick: Lewis**

Score: Lewis, 3-0

EVANDER HOLYFIELD

Merchant: "He would have a chance of beating him because of his age, and the fact that Holyfield was a light heavyweight before he bulked up. There is actually some intrigue in a fight like this because Holyfield, who will soon be 37, is near the end of his career, while Jones, at age 30, still has some good years left. Because of his quickness and other assets, Jones would stand a chance of winning, and I wouldn't make Holyfield any more than a 2-1 favorite." **Pick: Holyfield**

Czyz: "Even though he didn't get the job done with Lewis, Evander's a little too tough for Roy. He's too much of a warrior, and has enough of his own speed to shut Roy down. I don't think Roy could hurt him inside, and if you can't do that, you're not beating Evander. I pick Evander to win, but it's a great fight, and Roy is not completely out of it." **Pick: Holyfield**

Bontempo: "A great fight, but it would be a case of the good big man vs. the great smaller man. I can see the argument that if the Holyfield that fought Lewis fights Jones, he could get outboxed. But in a fight like this, Holyfield is the logical candidate to initiate a brawl with Jones to test the measure of his chin. Jones would have to back off to survive, and Holyfield would win a decision." **Pick: Holyfield**

Score: Holyfield, 3-0

IKE IBEABUCHI

Merchant: "It seems like no contest, bu it all depends on how Jones fights a gu like that; if he uses his amazing reflexe and his ability to not let the other guy hi him, he has a chance. Ibeabuchi looks lik a tremendous, exciting talent and is gener ating understandable excitement, bu remember, he only beat David Tua by a quarter of an inch. He beat Byrd too, bu Byrd will find out at the end of the day tha he didn't have what it takes [to be a legiti mate heavyweight]. I still think Ibeabuchi would be just too big, strong, and quick for Jones." **Pick: Ibeabuchi**

Czyz: "Ike's got great speed and endurance, punches like a mule, and can box almost as well as Roy. Roy would have to put himself in harm's way to make something happen, and that would be his downfall. Ibeabuchi is the last guy anybody should want to fight. He's a little bit of a head case, but when he's right, he throws as many punches as anybody and has power to spare. He found Byrd, one of the most elusive guys in the division. He'll find Roy, too." **Pick: Ibeabuchi**

Bontempo: "He would beat Jones in much the-same fashion he beat Byrd. He would cut down his angles, and Jones would have a dilemma: Do I run and survive, or risk running into something that

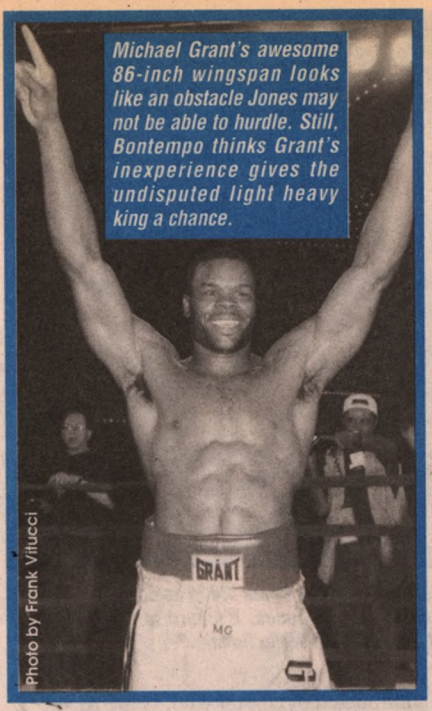
The 12-round war between David Tua and Ike Ibeabuchi in '97 proved that both men could take a lot of shots from a legitimate, hard-punching heavyweight opponent. Whether Jones can stand up to the punch of either man is a huge question mark.

could take me out? But it could still be an interesting fight because any time I can envision Jones getting stopped or overpowered, he would be forced to fight until the end came. And it's always interesting to see a guy with his talent in a real fight. But Ibeabuchi is riding too much momentum right now to get beaten by Jones."
Pick: **Ibeabuchi**

Score: **Ibeabuchi, 3-0**

MICHAEL GRANT

Merchant: "How does Roy get past that jab? And if he can't do that, how does he hit him? Grant doesn't seem as dynamic as Ibeabuchi, but he has dominated everybody he has fought. He might not be as explosive as people want him to be, but he has completely intimidated some good second-tier heavyweights. I just don't see Jones figuring out a way to beat him."
Pick: **Grant**



Michael Grant's awesome 86-inch wingspan looks like an obstacle Jones may not be able to hurdle. Still, Bontempo thinks Grant's inexperience gives the undisputed light heavy king a chance.

Photo by Frank Vilucci

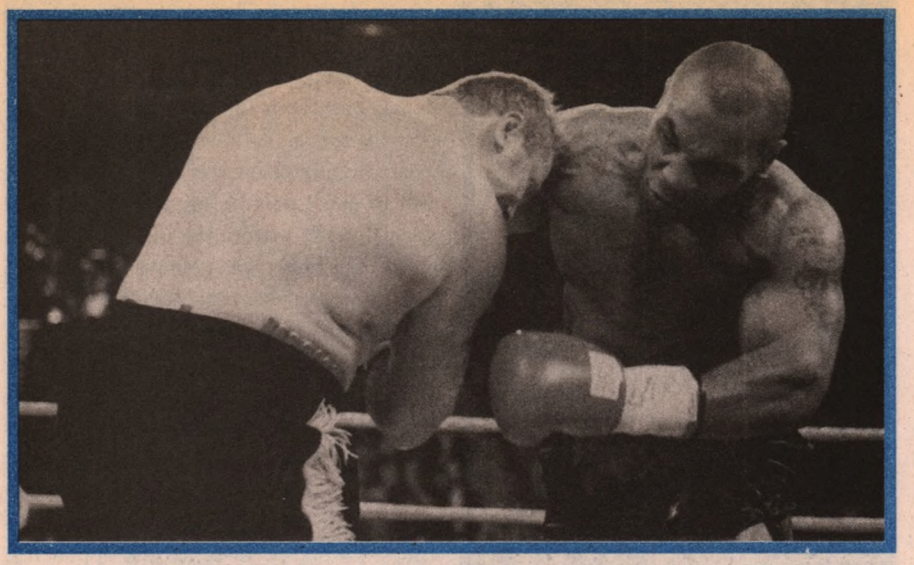
Czyz: "At 6'7", he's just too big for Roy to do anything with. Plus he's a good inside fighter for a big man, and doesn't work bad from the outside either. We always hear about how [light heavyweight champ] Billy Conn was beating the starch out of Joe Louis before he got knocked out. But the difference in size between Conn and Louis was nothing compared to the difference between Grant and Jones. Roy would be giving up just too much physically, and would be in danger every minute." **Pick: Grant**

Bontempo: "I would give Jones a good shot to win this one. I don't think Grant lived up to all his billing in his last three or four fights. He showed a lot of holes in his arsenal when he attacked his opponents. Because Grant is still somewhat green, this is just a hunch, but Jones might be willing to take chances and gamble a bit. I see Grant winning, but even with the size dif-

ODD BUT TRUE: THIS TIME JONES IS THE UNDERDOG

THE RING *conferred with longtime Las Vegas boxing handicapper and oddsmaker* ***Herb Lambeck*** *to get his opinions on the matchups:*

OPPONENT	FAVORITE	ODDS	COMMENTS
Lewis	Lewis	4-1	Lewis too big. Not a realistic fight for Jones because of the differences in height and weight.
Holyfield	None	Pick-'em	Holyfield won't be able to hit him in the ass. An easy fight for Jones, similar to Louis-Conn, but with different ending. Jones too slick, Holyfield too old.
Ibeabuchi	Ibeabuchi	7-1	Ibeabuchi best heavyweight going. If Jones' father said don't fight Buster Douglas, he'll never let him fight Ibeabuchi. Ibeabuchi will storm through Jones.
Grant	Grant	7-1	Another unrealistic fight for Jones. Grant too big and strong. Can't see Jones getting close enough to lay a hand on him.
Tyson	None	Pick-'em	A close betting fight. I give Jones a big shot to win this one, especially after what Tyson showed against Botha. There would be good action both ways in this one.
Golota	Golota	2-1	Once again, it comes down to size. Jones can't be fighting these big guys and expect to win easily.
Tua	Tua	4-1	Too strong for Jones. I can't see him taking this fight, when someone like Holyfield would be so much safer.
Rahman	Rahman	8-5	I like Rahman, just because of his size and his jab and the fact that he's a bonafide heavyweight. He's one of those guys that would be real difficult for Jones.
Byrd	Jones	2-1	Anybody that pays to see this fight should be arrested. Byrd can't hurt him, so Jones would outbox him. This would be similar to Jones and Montell Griffin.
Johnson	None	Pick-'em	I'm not impressed with Johnson. This is a close betting fight that Roy would have a real good shot at winning.



Jones would probably outbox Mike Tyson for a few rounds, as Frans Botha did in January, but Tyson's tenacity and phenomenal power should inevitably catch up with Jones. It's hard to imagine Jones bouncing back from a shot like the overhand right that crushed "The White Buffalo."

ference, I think Jones would make a good fight out of it and should not be counted out." **Pick: Grant**

Score: Grant, 3-0

MIKE TYSON

Merchant: "I might be mistaken, but Jones does not have enough to hold off a guy like Tyson. Jones would have to do too much running, and would wear himself out. Tyson is just way too strong for him, and as soon as he caught up with him, it would be over." **Pick: Tyson**

Czyz: "When you consider the physical assets, it's asking way too much of Roy. Against a Tua or Holyfield, if you look at the upside and downside of the risk-to-reward ratio, there is no real downside. But against Tyson there is a major downside. I can't see him moving for 12 rounds against a steamroller like Tyson. Mike has very good speed and punches as well, if not better, than everybody out there, even at this stage of his career. That power and speed, coupled with the fact that Mike is always moving forward, will cause Roy lots of problems. I don't think it's a fight Roy should be eager to take." **Pick: Tyson**

Bontempo: "This fight has a big question mark because Jones would actually be the taller fighter, and Tyson hasn't really looked like Tyson lately. But he still has that mystique. Given all of his abilities, the fact that Jones was afraid to fight Buster Douglas speaks volumes about what he's comfortable with. I think Jones would be intimidated by Tyson who, being as savage as he is, would eventually catch up to him. If Jones is able to frustrate Tyson, I could see the fight being a disqualification candidate. But I don't see Jones having the power to hold off a rampaging Tyson, and see him getting stopped around round nine." **Pick: Tyson**

Score: Tyson, 3-0

DAVID TUA

Merchant: "Tua is way too strong and relentless, and would eventually catch up to him. I see a sort of Ibeabuchi-Byrd scenario. Some people don't think Tua is all that impressive. But once he catches up to his opponent, he looks impressive." **Pick: Tua**

Czyz: "Tua doesn't have incredible height, reach, or speed, and looks like he could be outboxed by somebody with the speed and reflexes of somebody like Roy. Because it is so hard to hit Jones two times in a row, he has a good chance of beating Tua. But it's hard to pick a winner because of the weight and power variables. It's a good competitive fight early, and a very big tossup later on. If Roy weighs in at a solid 205 pounds, I have to go with him. But if Tua is at a solid 218, I go with him. If both are at those weights, it's anybody's fight. I would have to watch them both train to make a pick with any conviction. **Pick: Tua**

Bontempo: "It is as easy for me to see Tua stopping Jones, as it is Jones beating him by decision. If Jones doesn't gamble, he could confuse Tua and make it very hard for him to land a punch. But if he gambles, I see him walking into a left hook when Tua decides to serve notice around the third round. I give Jones a shot to win, but have to go with Tua's power to prevail." **Pick: Tua**

Score: Tua, 3-0

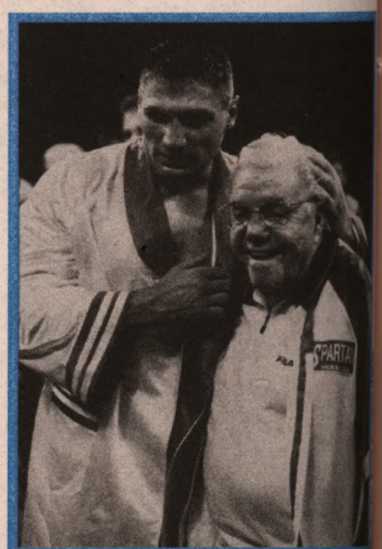
ANDREW GOLOTA

Merchant: "He has an outstanding jab for a heavyweight, and it would be hard for Jones to get past that. There is always the element of self-destruction on Golota's part, but Jones is a shorter opponent, and Golota usually only hits the taller guys below the belt. Golota is a man with lots of talent, but you could make a case for self-destruction. I don't know about him scoring a knockout, but I see him winning the fight." **Pick: Golota**

Czyz: "He's real big, but he's not the speediest heavyweight out there, and Roy could conceivably outbox him. Roy would have to close the gap because there would be a significant height and weight advantage for Golota. Golota would be beatable, but I would still pick him to win." **Pick: Golota**

Bontempo: "Golota is very vulnerable to being outpointed, but probably not stopped. He does have a fragile psyche, but he is in the lucky situation of knowing if he hits Jones, something major will happen. I pick him to win a very close decision." **Pick: Golota**

Score: Golota, 3-0

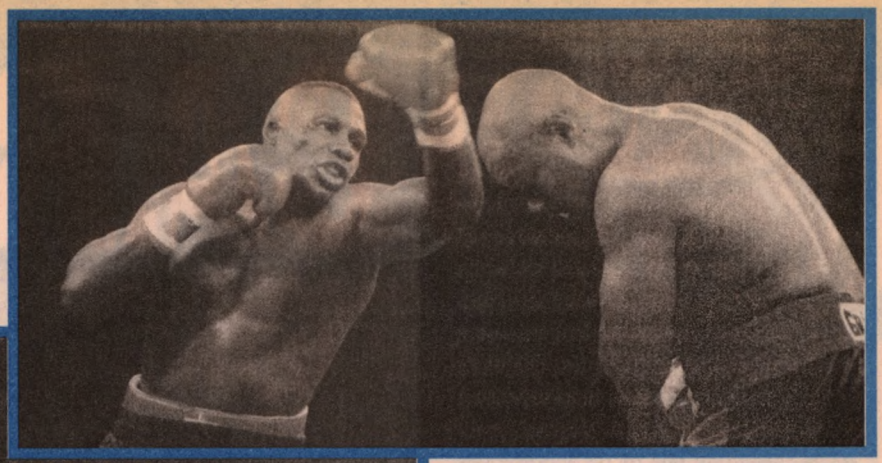


Andrew Golota exhibited a tendency to self-destruct in the past, but trainer Lou Duva has kept the Polish powerhouse under control lately. Our experts tend to agree that Golota has the size and talent to decision Jones.

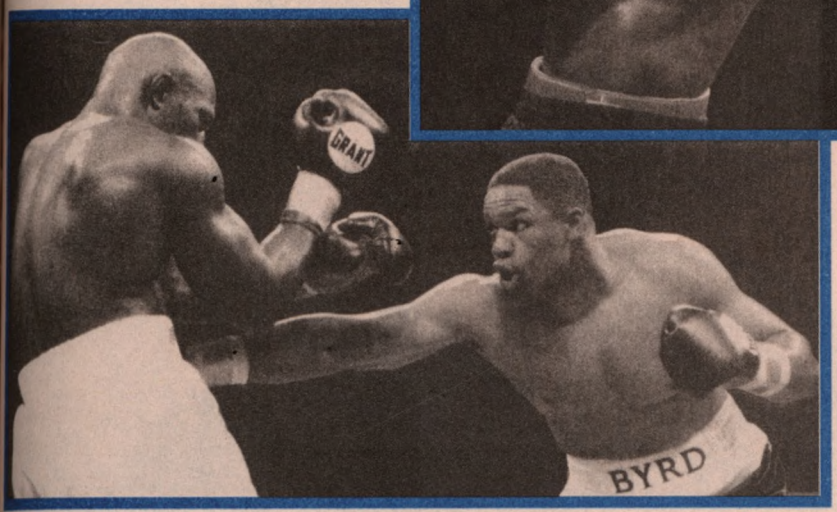
HASIM RAHMAN

Merchant: "Jones is clever enough to possibly outbox Rahman, but that is still doubtful. Rahman has been fighting his entire career as a heavyweight, and is fairly clever himself." **Pick: Rahman**

Czyz: "Rahman works inside pretty well, and if he came to fight he would give Roy a tough night. The good big man beats



Hasim Rahman, pictured against Jesse Ferguson, is a versatile heavyweight who can be effective both inside and outside. The size factor again seems to be too much for Jones.



Chris Byrd may be quick and elusive by heavyweight standards, but compared to Jones, he's slow and easy to find. Merchant, Czyz, and Bontempo all concur that the blown-up middleweight from Michigan would represent the easiest fight for Jones among The Ring's top 10.

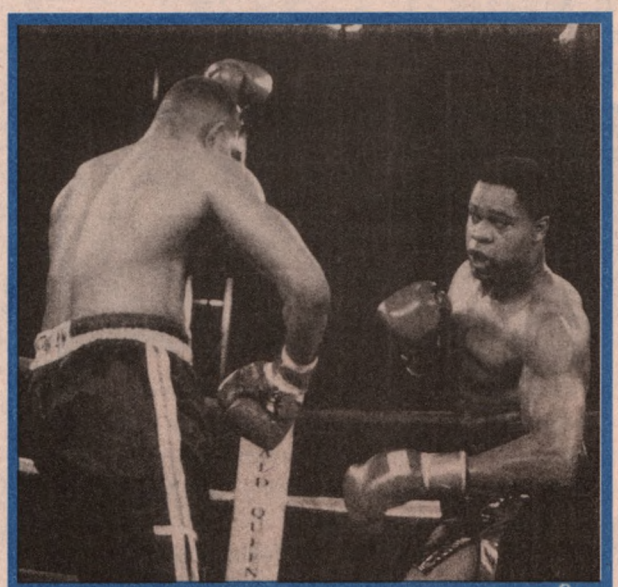
the good little man 80 to 90 percent of the time. But here you have a great light heavyweight trying to beat a good heavyweight. Roy can beat the average heavyweights, but beating the good ones is a lot more difficult." **Pick: Rahman**

Bontempo: "I see Jones taking a few heavy shots, then being content to stay back and not be too aggressive. It would probably be a close fight, and he would lose on points." **Pick: Rahman**

Score: Rahman 3-0

CHRIS BYRD

Merchant: "Like Jones, Byrd is also a blown-up middleweight, but Jones is probably stronger, faster, and more elusive than he is. Byrd shouldn't be in anybody's top-10, and really only deserves mention in the lower part of the ratings. He got rated because nobody wanted to fight him. As soon as he fought a quality heavyweight [Ibeabuchi], he got knocked out. Byrd is more like a negative force than a positive one with his pitty-pat punches. Of all the top-10 fighters, Byrd is the only one I can clearly see Jones dominating, perhaps even stopping." **Pick: Jones**



Kirk Johnson's two wars with former cruiserweight champion Al Cole exposed some of his limitations, but the Canadian heavyweight still has a rare blend of size and boxing ability that would pose trouble for Jones.

Czyz: "He can't hurt Roy, is not as quick as Roy, and is well-suited for Roy to beat. Roy has fought faster light heavyweights, like Lou Del Valle and Virgil Hill, and Byrd doesn't have the thunderous shots that most heavyweights are capable of providing. If I was a betting man, I would pick Roy to win this one. Not to take anything away from Byrd, but Roy is not your typical anything. His extraordinary speed, even as a heavyweight, will be like nothing Byrd, himself a bulked-up middleweight, has ever seen." **Pick: Jones**

Bontempo: "Jones would have no concern for Byrd's power, who is like a heavyweight Pernell Whitaker. Without the fear of power, Roy would probably go after Byrd and outpoint him. If he didn't go after him, he would still probably win, but the fight would be an all-time stinker." **Pick: Jones**

Score: Jones, 3-0

KIRK JOHNSON

Merchant: "He's a good young fighter who is not as big as some of the other guys in the division. If Roy bulked up, I would give him a chance, but I still pick Johnson to win." **Pick: Johnson**

Czyz: "As he showed against Al Cole, Johnson is not the cream of the crop, but he has the potential to do bigger and better things. Roy can win with his style, but a motivated Johnson would probably beat him. Their styles would not make for a great matchup, but I see Johnson outpointing him." **Pick: Johnson**

(Continued on page 63)

The RING UPDATE

CARMEN BASILIO

"Boxing May Have Saved My Life"

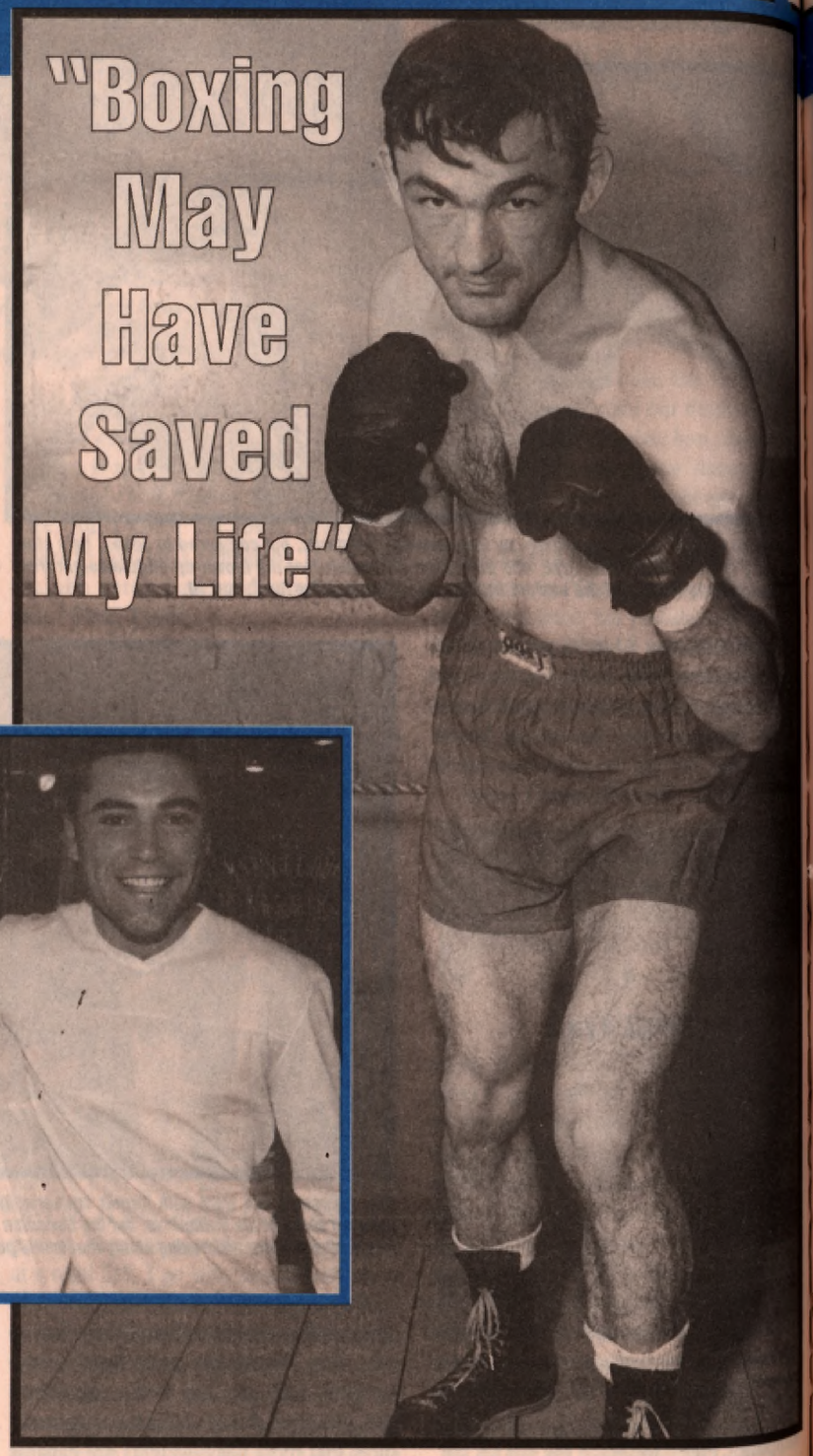
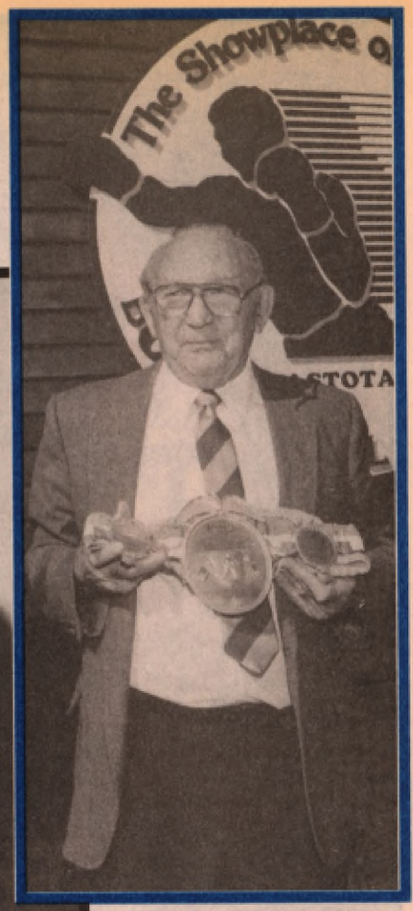


Photo by Pat Orr

Basilio as he looked during his days as the undisputed welterweight champion (above right) and today with WBC welter titlist Oscar De La Hoya (above) at the International Boxing Hall of Fame, which is located in Basilio's hometown of Canastota, New York.

By Brian Doogan

Confronting one of the world's best welterweights to forcefully assert one's rights is a task beyond most 72-year-old men not long out of major heart surgery. But then Carmen Basilio, the onion farmer from Canastota who claimed the welterweight title from Tony DeMarco in 1955 before defying the natural order to relieve Sugar Ray Robinson of the middleweight crown, was never much swayed by the limits imposed on those who are ordinary. One look at his rearranged features, reflections of battle that speak more eloquently than a row of tin medals might, confirms as much. Canastota's Carmen never thought much of the soft option. Not at 22, not even at 72, and faced by a man who might be his grandson, who only weeks ago was attempting to achieve a stature in the game that might be Mark Antony to Basilio's Caesar.



Nat Fleischer, founder of THE RING, presents Basilio with the middleweight championship belt he earned by beating Sugar Ray Robinson in 1957 (left). Basilio's precious belt can now been seen at the IBHOF (above).

"I was down in Pennsylvania doing a dinner engagement, and decided to have a reasonably early night when I got back to my hotel room," Basilio recalled in that distinctive gravelly, rhythmic, strong New York voice. "Well, I just couldn't get to sleep with the racket coming from the room up above, where someone was dragging furniture from one corner to the other. On and on it went. I called reception. It still went on. I went to reception, made them aware of my feelings. The noise persisted. I had enough. I got out of bed, got dressed, climbed the stairs, pounded on the door, and pitched into the young man who opened it. 'If you don't quit making noise,' I said, 'I'll kick the s___ out of you.' I went back downstairs, got into bed, and the noise was gone. I slept well the rest of the night.

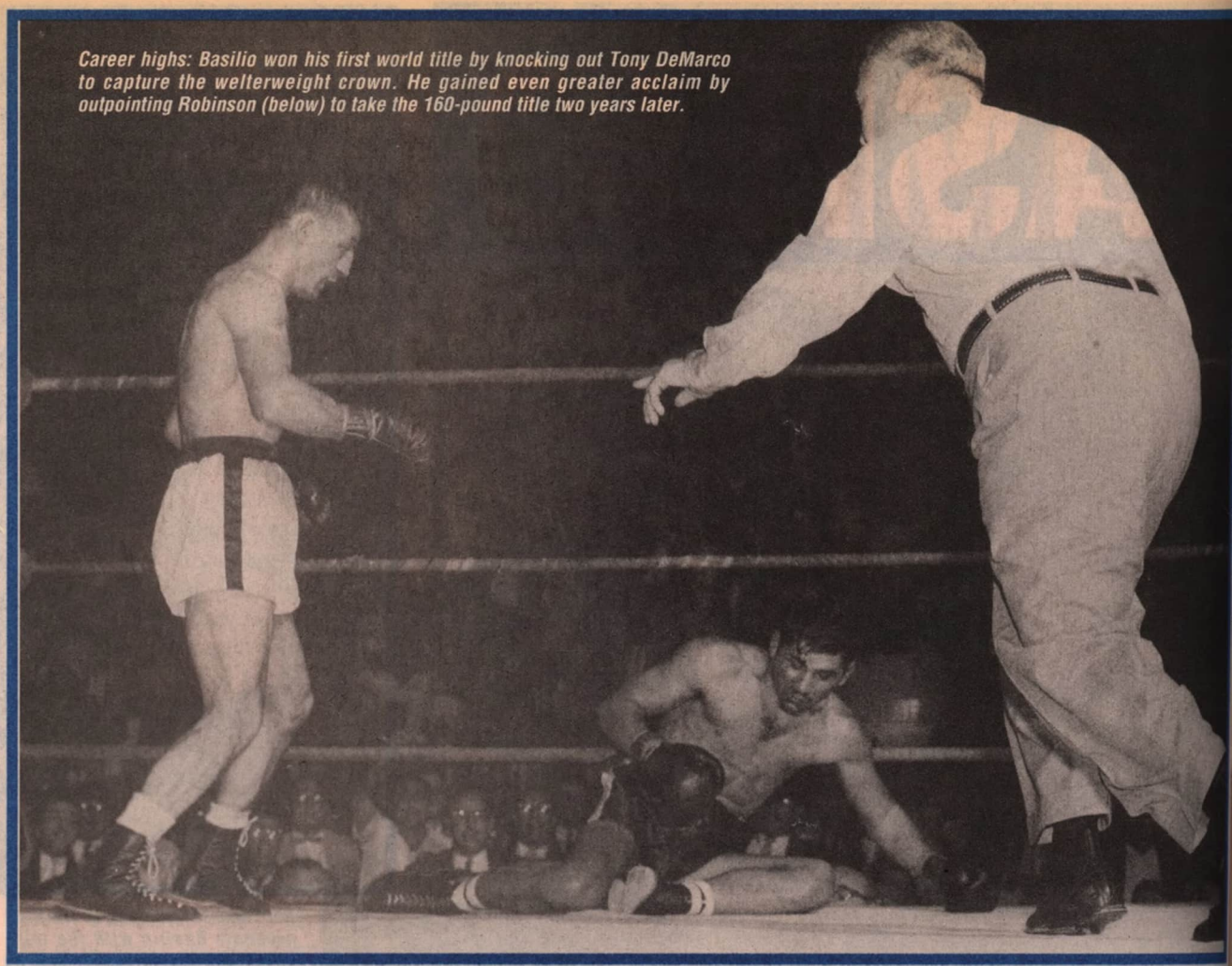
"Next morning at breakfast, I was told the man I had had to speak to was Felix Trinidad. I smiled. But I'll tell you, if he hadn't quieted down, I would have kicked the s___ out of him, I was so annoyed."

Until Trinidad's unification bout with Oscar De La Hoya at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Basilio had never seen the Puerto Rican box. You sense he would not have been much intimidated even if he had. Basilio retains such an enviable level of vitality that it is impossible to regard him as any older than middle-aged. His schedule is liberally laden with after-dinner commitments, charity work, and regular outings to the golf course. A rocking chair in a quiet corner is not for him.

"I'm a little over a year retired," he said. "I'm not crazy about it."

For 20 years, Basilio was a physical education teacher at LeMoyne College in Syracuse before retiring from the post in 1981.

"I worked the kids hard," he said at the end of another successful Hall of Fame induction weekend, held annually in his hometown, which elevates him to the role of host celebrity. "I was strict, and some of them didn't like me. When they arrived as freshmen, I told them they might hate my guts, but by the time they were leaving



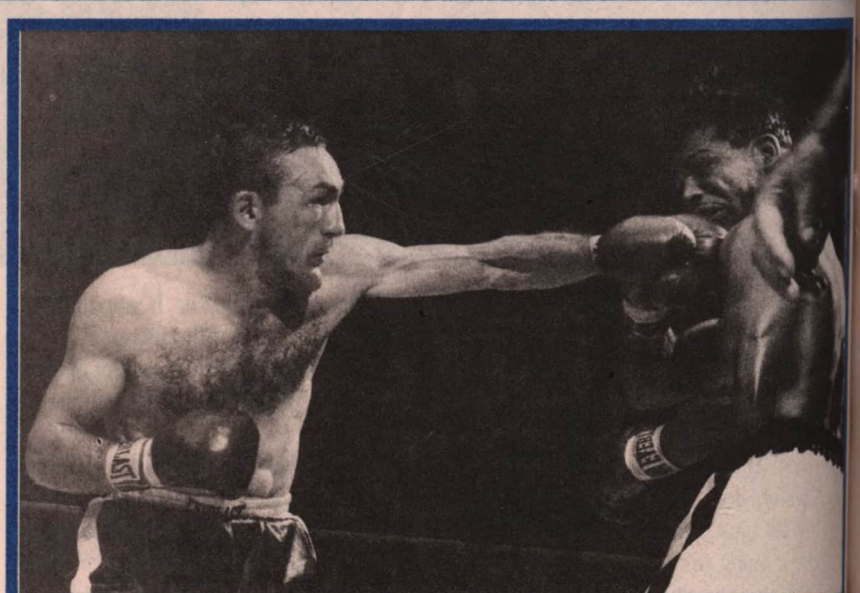
Career highs: Basilio won his first world title by knocking out Tony DeMarco to capture the welterweight crown. He gained even greater acclaim by outpointing Robinson (below) to take the 160-pound title two years later.

they'd be fitter than they'd ever been. I had a couple come to me who wanted to box, but I told them their parents were paying for them to get an education, not a busted nose. I told them to pay attention to their academics and graduate.

"Through the summer vacation and at weekends, I worked as a representative for Genesee Breweries, and stayed with them for 34 years. They've been good to me. I represented them at sports banquets and the likes, and I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the company."

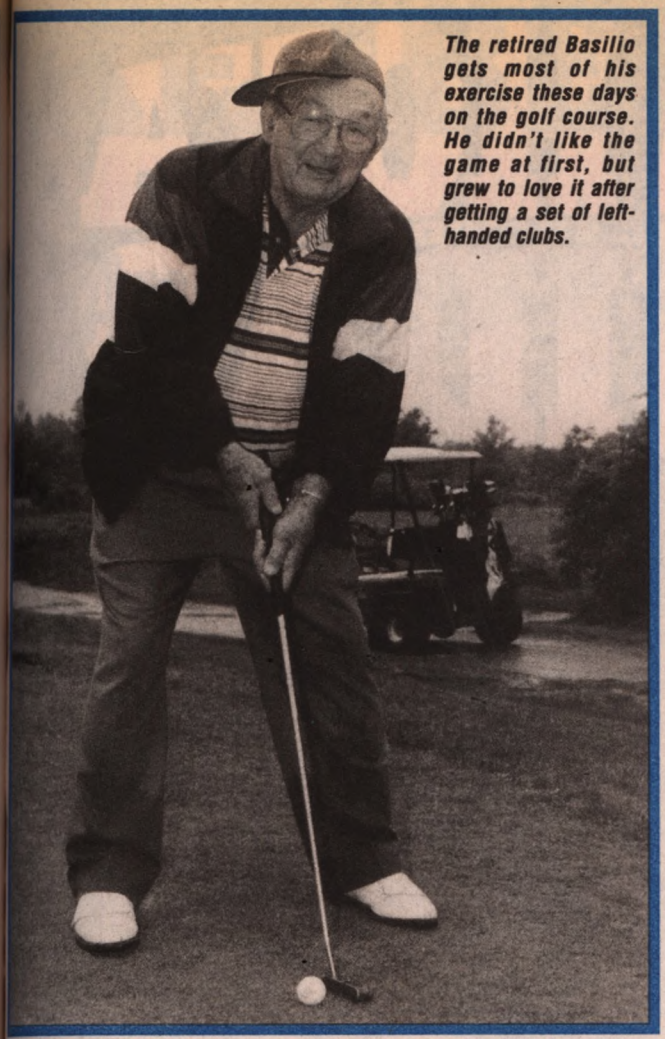
One benefit from his increased leisure time is the freedom it gives him to play golf. He first took up the game in 1955, the year he outpointed DeMarco to win the welterweight belt. Despite boxing his entire career right-handed, he is a natural southpaw. The clubs he wielded on the golf course, however, were right-handed, and he was unable to adapt as successfully as he had in the ring.

"It was horrible," Basilio groaned. "I played for a year and a half before I took the clubs and slung 'em in the basement. That's



where they remained. But two years later, I was in Augusta, Georgia, to box a fight during Masters week. I got acquainted with two good golfers, Willie Tonnessa and Jackie Burke. They asked me if I could play. I said I quit, that I hated the damn game, and I told them why. Jackie said he'd send me up a left-handed set, and that's the way I've played ever since, as a leftie.

"Some years ago I was playing a recently opened course in Kirkville, New York, the Town Isle Golf Club. The opening pa



The retired Basilio gets most of his exercise these days on the golf course. He didn't like the game at first, but grew to love it after getting a set of left-handed clubs.

Photo by Pat Orr

One of the best parts of the IBHOF induction weekend for Basilio is that he gets to visit with old friends and rivals. On hand this year was Johnny Saxton. They fought three times, with Basilio regaining and retaining the 147-pound title after Saxton had taken it away in their first bout.

hree measured 128 yards. The green was rotected by a bunker in front, blocking our view of the bottom of the flag from the ee, but I struck my shot well, and thought I'm either in or close to it. There were four of us playing, and when we got up to the green, there was no sight of my ball. One of my playing partners stepped up to the hole and said, 'You sonuvabitch, you got a hole-in-one.' He's dead now, and you shouldn't speak ill of the dead, but it just about killed him. He kept repeating, 'You sonuvabitch, you got a hole-in-one.' Now he was a friend of mine, but I wanted to kick him in the butt. *I'd* be happy for him if he had played the shot.

"Anyway, the ball's lying around here somewhere with the date and my accomplishment engraved on it. Mine was the first hole-in-one they ever had at the club. That made my friend feel even worse."

Basilio insists he is now playing better than ever, a feat he owes to the success of open heart surgery carried out on him two years ago. Followers of boxing always knew he had an abnormally large heart to compile a career record of 56-16-7 (27) that encompassed the winning of the welterweight championship twice as well as the world middleweight title. It was a career that included victims the caliber of Ike Williams, Billy Graham, DeMarco, Johnny Saxton, and Robinson, and heroic efforts against Kid Gavilan, Gene Fullmer (twice), and Paul Pender in another world title challenge in his final fight at age 34. It took the doctors, however, to establish the actual uniqueness of that heart. When they operated they had to make six bypasses, which was almost unprecedented given that the normal anatomy of the heart has three major coronary arteries.

"People look at me when I tell them this, and think it's a load of bunkum, that it's impossible. Well, they did a sixth bypass on me, baby," Basilio proudly declares. "The doctors themselves who operated on me had never seen it before. They theorized that with all the running and training I did through my boxing career, my heart had developed another artery. That gave me increased stamina.

"I always enjoyed boxing, right up to just before my last fight when I lost interest, which made me decide to quit. But the crazy thing is that boxing may have saved my life. That extra artery was pumping the blood around when I might have died had it not been there. That's pretty amazing."

Basilio is less overwhelmed by the heirs to a dynasty he and his peers contributed so much to create. De La Hoya, he feels, in his era would have struggled to protect and enhance his Golden Boy image.

"I saw him against Oba Carr, and the left hook he finished him with didn't impress me," he said. "I saw some loopholes."

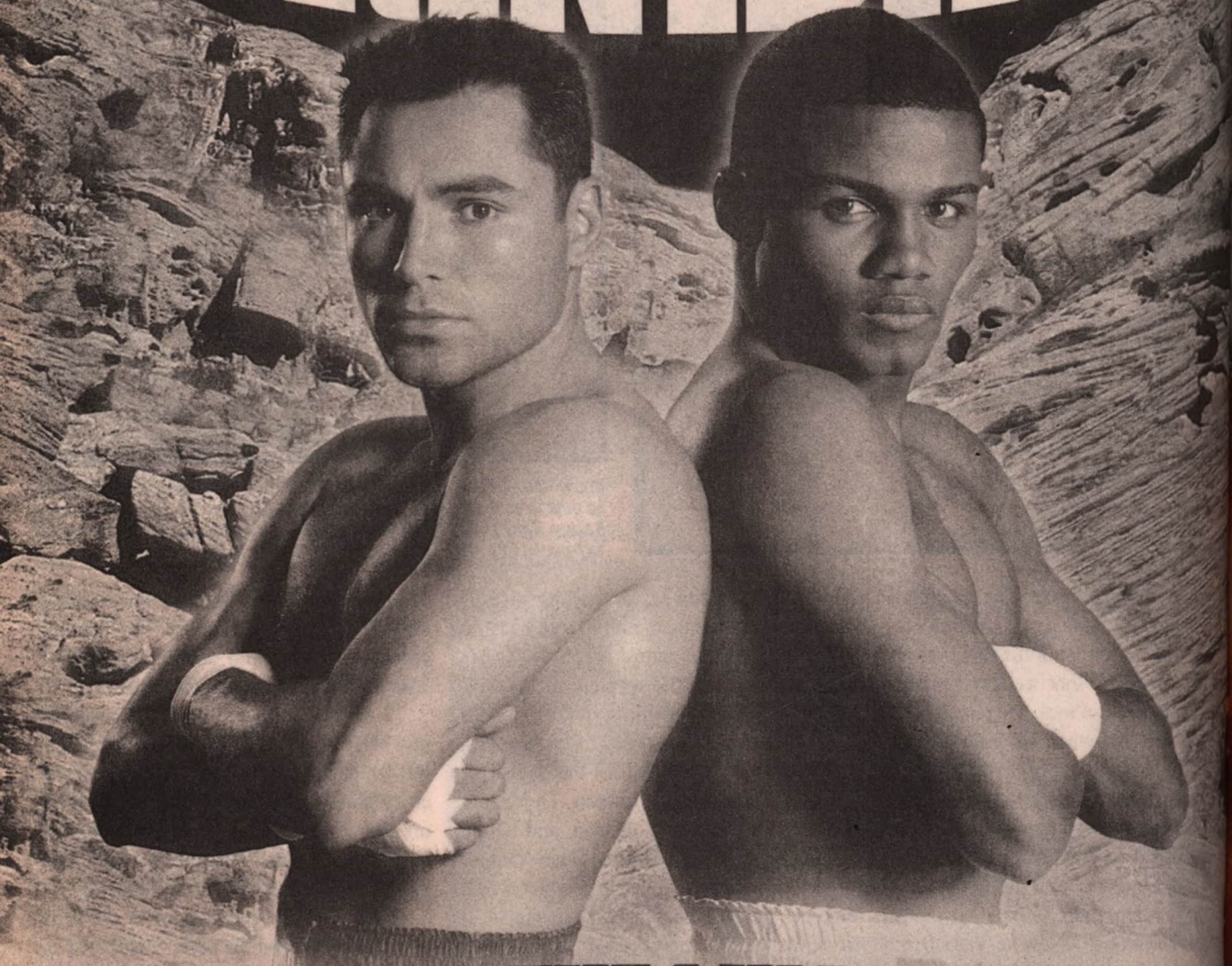
Assertive and unyielding, Basilio's character was forged in a different age.

"This is an entirely different world

(Continued on page 64)

DE LA HOYA TRINIDAD

THE ULTIMATE SHOWDOWN



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IKE IBEABUCHI

THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN IN BOXING

In And Out Of The Ring

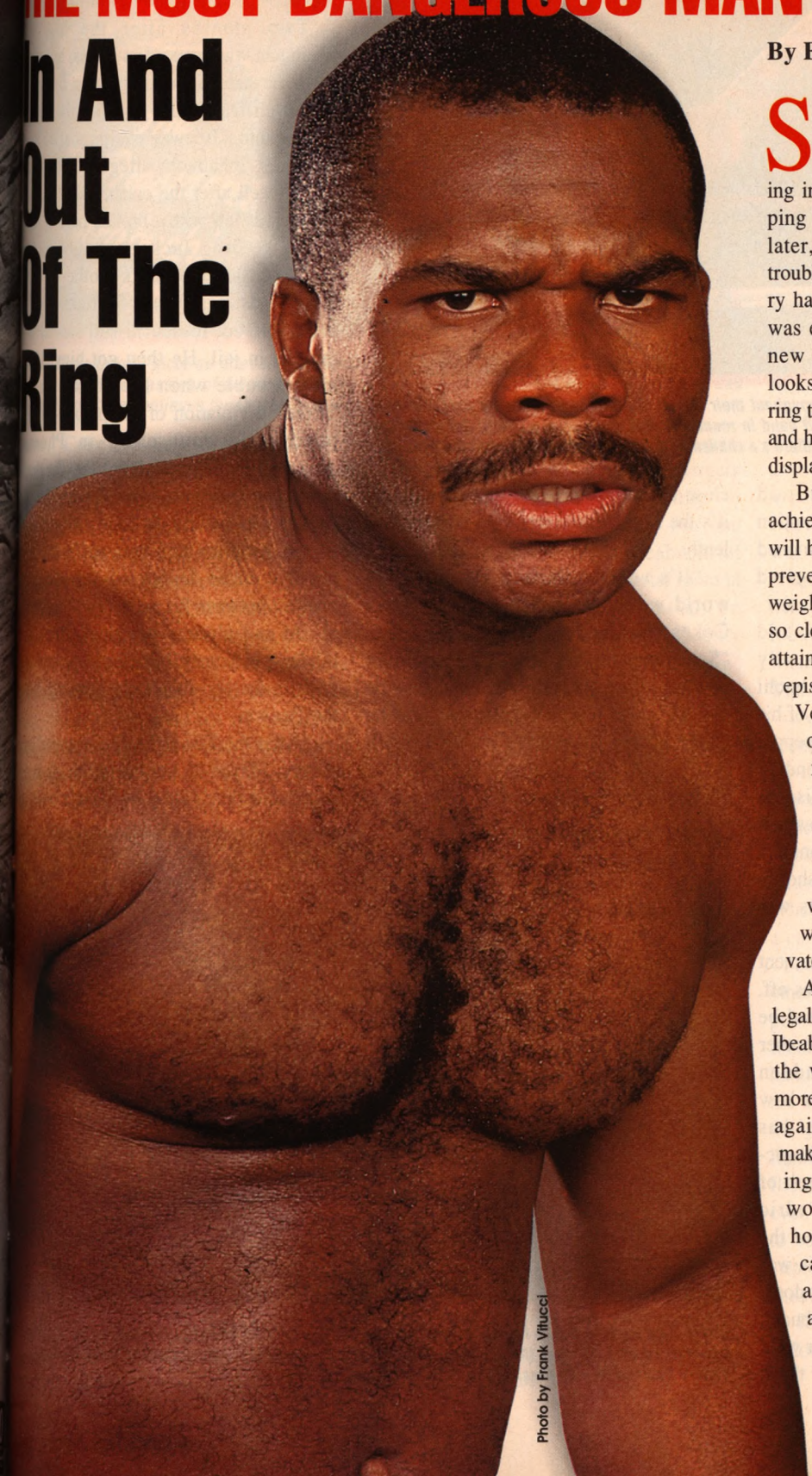


Photo by Frank Vitucci

By Eric Raskin

Since he burst onto the boxing scene by defeating David Tua in 1997, and then burst right back off it by landing in a Texas jail on charges of kidnapping and attempted murder two months later, the comparisons to the two most troubled champions in heavyweight history have been unavoidable. Ike Ibeabuchi was either the new Sonny Liston or the new Mike Tyson—take your pick. He looks more like Liston, his outside-the-ring troubles have been more like Tyson's, and he fights with the destructiveness both displayed in their primes.

But will Ibeabuchi have time to achieve what Liston and Tyson did? Or will his disastrous encounters with the law prevent him from ever becoming heavyweight champion of the world, a goal he so clearly has the physical capabilities to attain? On the heels of Ibeabuchi's latest episode, which saw him thrown in a Las Vegas jail on the very serious charges of sexual assault and battery, the fear for boxing fans is that Ibeabuchi may ultimately be remembered not as the new Liston or Tyson, but as the successor to the legacy of junior middleweight phenom Tony Ayala Jr., who lost 16 years—practically his whole career—doing time for aggravated sexual assault.

As of July 21, 1999, despite myriad legal hiccups over the previous two years, Ibeabuchi was the hottest heavyweight in the world and was in position to make more than $1-million for a fight on HBO against fellow undefeated star-in-the-making Michael Grant. But on the morning of July 22, the big, bad Nigerian wolf huffed and puffed on his own house one time too many, and it all came crashing down. Ibeabuchi was arrested on charges that he sexually assaulted a woman in his hotel suite at The Mirage, and was booked into the Clark County Detention Center.

Photo by Bill Chan/HBO

Ibeabuchi patiently stalked Chris Byrd throughout their March '99 fight, and when he sent the tricky southpaw hurtling to the canvas with a left hand in round five, his stock went soaring. But as serious legal problems now hover over Ibeabuchi, there's a chance he'll never get to capitalize on the win.

Police Lieutenant Tom Monahan said guests at The Mirage heard a commotion in the early-morning hours and summoned hotel security, and when the police arrived at about 5:30 a.m., a 21-year-old "entertainer" called to Ibeabuchi's suite told Monahan that the fighter had sexually assaulted her. Monahan said Ibeabuchi then locked himself in the bathroom of his suite, and the officers had to spray pepper gas under the door to get him to surrender.

"This was not like a case of dispute over money or not a matter of services rendered and payment expected," Monahan told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* shortly after the incident. "We believe this was forcible rape."

HBO's Lou DiBella made a statement the next day that Ibeabuchi-Grant was off, and that his attention would instead be turned toward pairing Grant with another top young heavyweight. The sudden switch in HBO's interests underlines how swiftly and completely Ibeabuchi has taken himself out of the heavyweight picture—maybe for an Ayala-like length of time. Ibeabuchi's promoter, Cedric Kushner, even said a few days after the arrest that deportation back to Nigeria was a possibility. As a boxing fan, you don't know whether to feel sorry for Ibeabuchi, get angry at him, or just plain fear for what he's capable of doing next. But for those close to the troubled 26-year-old slugger, it's the anger that's surfacing most prevalently.

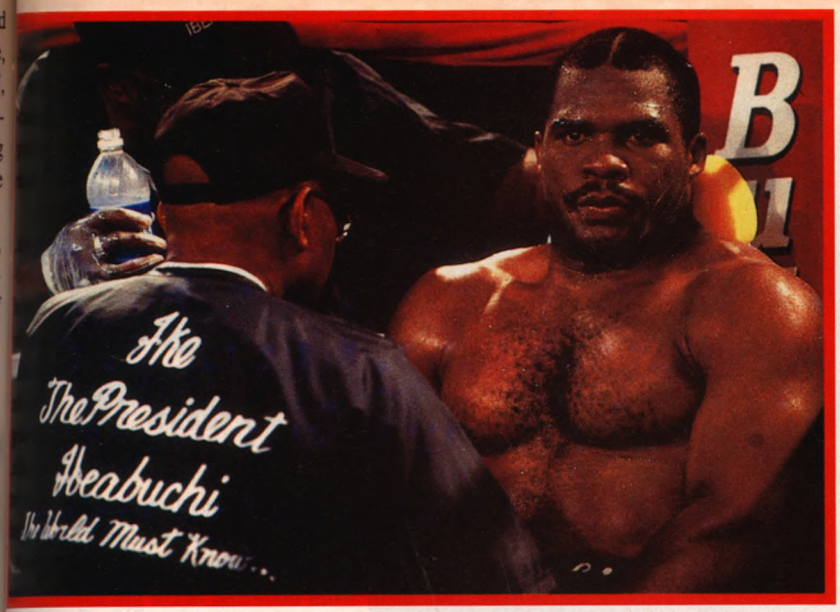
"It's very frustrating," said former world welterweight champion Curtis Cokes, Ibeabuchi's long-time trainer. "Sometimes I can't sleep, thinking about how we were right at the threshold, how he was all set to become champion. And he keeps killing everything we've worked for."

Ibeabuchi was an unknown with a 16-0 record when he upset the highly regarded and previously unbeaten Tua via a close unanimous 12-round decision on June 7, 1997. The win should have been a launching pad to greatness, but it wasn't long before "The President's" battles outside the ropes became more newsworthy.

Two months after the big win, Ibeabuchi was arrested in Texas, his adopted home state, after kidnapping the son of his ex-girlfriend and injuring the boy by driving into a freeway overpass at 65 miles per hour. Ibeabuchi allegedly struck the boy as well after the crash, and the young victim was left with a broken pelvis, ankle and jaw. Greg Juckett, a publicist for Kushner, said the boy's mother dropped the charges in exchange for financial compensation, but Ibeabuchi still served three months in jail. He then got himself into more trouble when he left the state of Texas—a violation of his parole—to seek psychiatric counseling in Phoenix, Arizona. The excuse from the Ibeabuchi camp for the whole mess was that the fighter was having difficulty adjusting to life in America and was suffering from possible manic depression because of the contrast between his successful professional life and gloomy personal life. Cokes thinks it also may have had something to do with the ego Ibeabuchi developed after the Tua win.

"After the Tua fight, Ike changed completely. Maybe he got hit too much in that fight, and that's why he hasn't been the

David Tua dished out a lot of leather in his 1997 war with Ibeabuchi, but "The President" persevered and handed the Samoan his only defeat to date. Unfortunately, that breakthrough victory seemed to give Ibeabuchi a dangerous ego.



Trainer Curtis Cokes, pictured attending to Ibeabuchi between rounds of the Byrd fight, had grown frustrated with the hassles of working with the Nigerian long before the headline-grabbing Las Vegas arrest. Cokes believes Ibeabuchi "wants to break the law."

same," Cokes jokingly reasoned. "We always knew he had some problems, even before the Tua fight, but they were never that serious, and they were always kept quiet. But since then, Ike's been thinking he can do whatever he wants.

"His biggest problem is that he just doesn't obey the rules. He wants to break the law. A lot of times, I'll ride in the car with him, and he'll drive real fast. I'll tell him, 'Slow down, this isn't Nigeria, we have different rules here, and you're gonna get yourself a ticket.' Or he'll go to the barber shop, get a haircut, and then he'll just walk out without paying. Of course, we [the guys at the gym] know the barber, so we go back there and pay the guy. But Ike doesn't get it. He needs help, and he and his family don't see that. He thinks everybody's after him. If Ike looks in the mirror, he'll see the real problem. Something's wrong with Ike. Ray Charles could see that."

When the post-Tua dust finally settled in mid-'98, Ibeabuchi got his career back on track with a first-round kayo of journeyman Tim Ray after a 13-month layoff. A win over another trialhorse, Everton Davis, followed in September '98, and as far as the public knew, Ibeabuchi had his act together heading into his second major test, a March '99 fight with unbeaten Chris Byrd. But as we've since learned, Ibeabuchi's mental stability hadn't improved at all.

Days after Ibeabuchi's arrest in Vegas, a previous accusation that had been largely ignored resurfaced. According to Monahan, another "entertainer," this one 23 years old, had accused Ibeabuchi of sexual assault in the fighter's hotel room at the Treasure Island hotel-casino on December 23, 1998. The Clark County District Attorney's office hadn't arrested Ibeabuchi because they felt the case lacked evidence, but in light of his subsequent arrest on the same charges, the case was reopened.

"The President" is more than just a nickname to Ibeabuchi; it's practically his alter ego. He refused to pose in his boxing trunks until THE RING's photographer agreed to shoot him wearing his president's outfit.

The situation worsened when Ibeabuchi appeared in court for arraignment on July 30. He became upset when the prosecution asked that bail be set at $5-million and had to be removed from court following an outburst. The judge ordered him to be held without bail pending his next court appearance, then ultimately reduced the bail to $2-million.

While the July sexual assault charge was the most widely publicized of Ibeabuchi's legal woes, it was not his first arrest of '99, nor was it even the first time this year that pepper spray was needed to control him. Those precedents were set on June 12 at the Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport, where Ibeabuchi was charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and criminal mischief. According to a report filed by the DFW Airport Department of Public Safety, Ibeabuchi was denied boarding onto an overbooked plane. When he was asked to go to the ticket counter to have his money refunded, Ibeabuchi reportedly said, "You know what, I am going on the airplane anyway. You will have to stop me."

At that point, one of two officers on the scene told Ibeabuchi he was under arrest for disorderly conduct, and the fighter ran down the jet-way, pushing passengers aside. Ibeabuchi was stopped and ordered to place his hands behind his back, but he refused, and more officers were called in. When Ibeabuchi was then threatened with a can of pepper spray, he reportedly said, "You better shoot me." He then told the other officer to get out of his way, at which point that officer sprayed him in the face. Ibeabuchi then staggered about with one hand over his eyes, saying, "Don't spray me anymore." But when he continued up the jet-way, he was sprayed again, and finally tackled. It took two officers to bring Ibeabuchi down and handcuff him, and even when he was thrown in the police car to be taken away for booking, the report states that he "kicked out the door windshield" of the vehicle.

Ibeabuchi is also facing legal action following an incident with sparring partner

(Continued on page 56)

NUMBER-ONE CONTENDER

DAVID TUA

All He Can Do Is Knock Out The Guy In Front Of Him

By Johnnie Whitehead

Photo by Frank Vitucci

He doesn't exactly measure up with the redwoods among the heavyweight division. In fact, it's easy to overlook a 237-pound stump such as David Tua. He speaks softly, without a hint of anger or aggression. But if you blink for one second, you may find yourself on the end of one of the best left hooks in boxing.

Lennox Lewis and Evander Holyfield are, to varying degrees, damaged goods. It seems everyone is talking about the future of the heavyweight division these days, but most only mention Michael Grant or Ike Ibeabuchi as the heir to the throne. But don't forget the 5'10" Samoan who tore through all of the young prospects before losing a disputed decision to Ibeabuchi two years ago. He isn't going to go away anytime soon, and he has the ranking to prove it.

"As far as I'm concerned, I'm still undefeated," said Tua, 33-1 (29), the morning after clocking Gary Bell in one round on July 17 in Stateline, Nevada. "I'll knock him [Ibeabuchi] out this time. I'm the only guy who can do it. They gave him the fight when I fought him. When he fought Chris Byrd, he knocked out a blown-up middleweight. People have to understand, I didn't dodge anybody. I fought all the best young guys out there and never got any credit."

Bell, 21-3 (14), wasn't one of them. By knocking him out at Caesars Tahoe, Tua did little more than keep busy and maintain his number-one standing with the IBF. He's in line for a shot at the winner of November's Lewis-Holyfield rematch, but the three major sanctioning bodies have three different number ones, which ultimately could leave Tua the odd man out thanks to the political maneuvering that's bound to occur once an undisputed heavyweight champion is crowned. Currently, the WBA's number-one contender is "Huggable" Henry Akinwande, whose mother probably wouldn't even pay to watch him fight, while the WBC lists John "The Quiet Stiff" Ruiz, whom Tua knocked out in 19 seconds in 1996, as its top contender. Tua, ranked second by the WBC, is nowhere to be found among the 15 heavyweights included in the WBA's June '99 ratings.

Unfortunately, Tua will be lucky to get a crack at a portion of the crown by this time next year. The best scenario

for him is if Lewis wins, thereby keeping the titles out of Don King's hands and in HBO's.

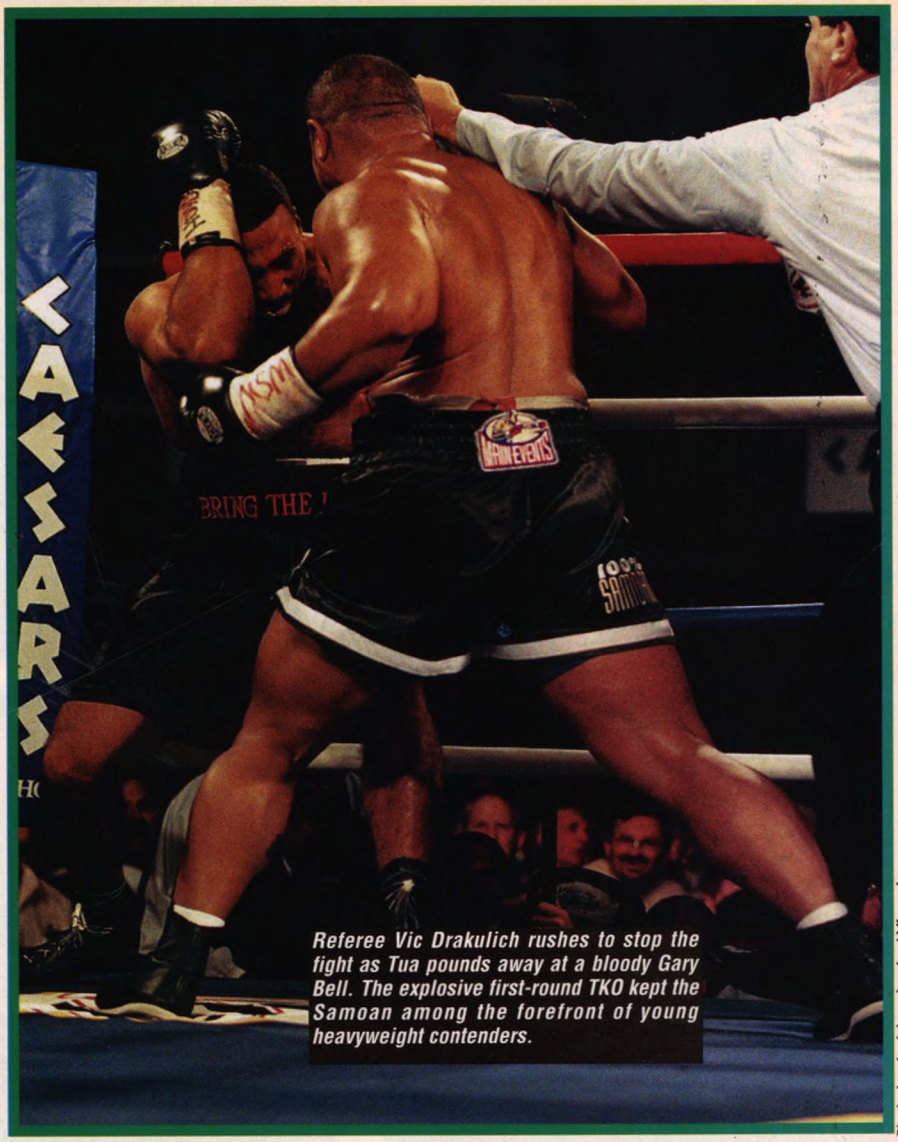
"David is the only legitimate number-one contender out there," said Lou DiBella, HBO Sports' senior vice president, the network that televised Tua's latest triumph. "This is a guy with incredible knockout power. He's the kind of heavyweight people want to see."

They saw plenty against Bell, 224, Queens, New York, even though he lasted less than one round, courtesy of a two-fisted shellacking. Merciful referee Vic Drakulich pulled the plug at 1:19.

"It was a good win," said Tua. "Regardless that the fight ended quickly, that's the way I wanted it. It had to be done in style. In the right way. There's a difference between just winning and looking good winning."

More surprising than Tua coming in 13 pounds chunkier than his last fight were the right hands that finished the job. As Tua shot his signature left hook at Bell, who braced himself in the corner, he followed with a straight right that landed flush. Bell—cut badly over the left eye, probably from a clash of heads seconds earlier—easily picked off that vaunted left hook, but was unprepared for the rights that numbed him.

For most of his career, Tua has been typecast as a one-handed brawler. A clever fighter could nullify his best punch by keeping his right hand pinned to his chin



Referee Vic Drakulich rushes to stop the fight as Tua pounds away at a bloody Gary Bell. The explosive first-round TKO kept the Samoan among the forefront of young heavyweight contenders.

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

Tua's late-round power came in handy when Oleg Maskaev got off to a points lead in their 1997 bout. When Tua drilled the Russian with a left hook in the 11th round, the scorecards became academic.

and moving to his left, away from the hook. Hasim Rahman did it for eight-plus rounds last December, while pitching a near-shutout. Of course, that was before the Samoan slugger turned things around by drilling "The Rock" with a clean left hook just before the bell to end the ninth, and then another immediately after the bell. Rahman never recovered from the after-the-bell shot, and Tua went on to win by a controversial stoppage in the 10th.

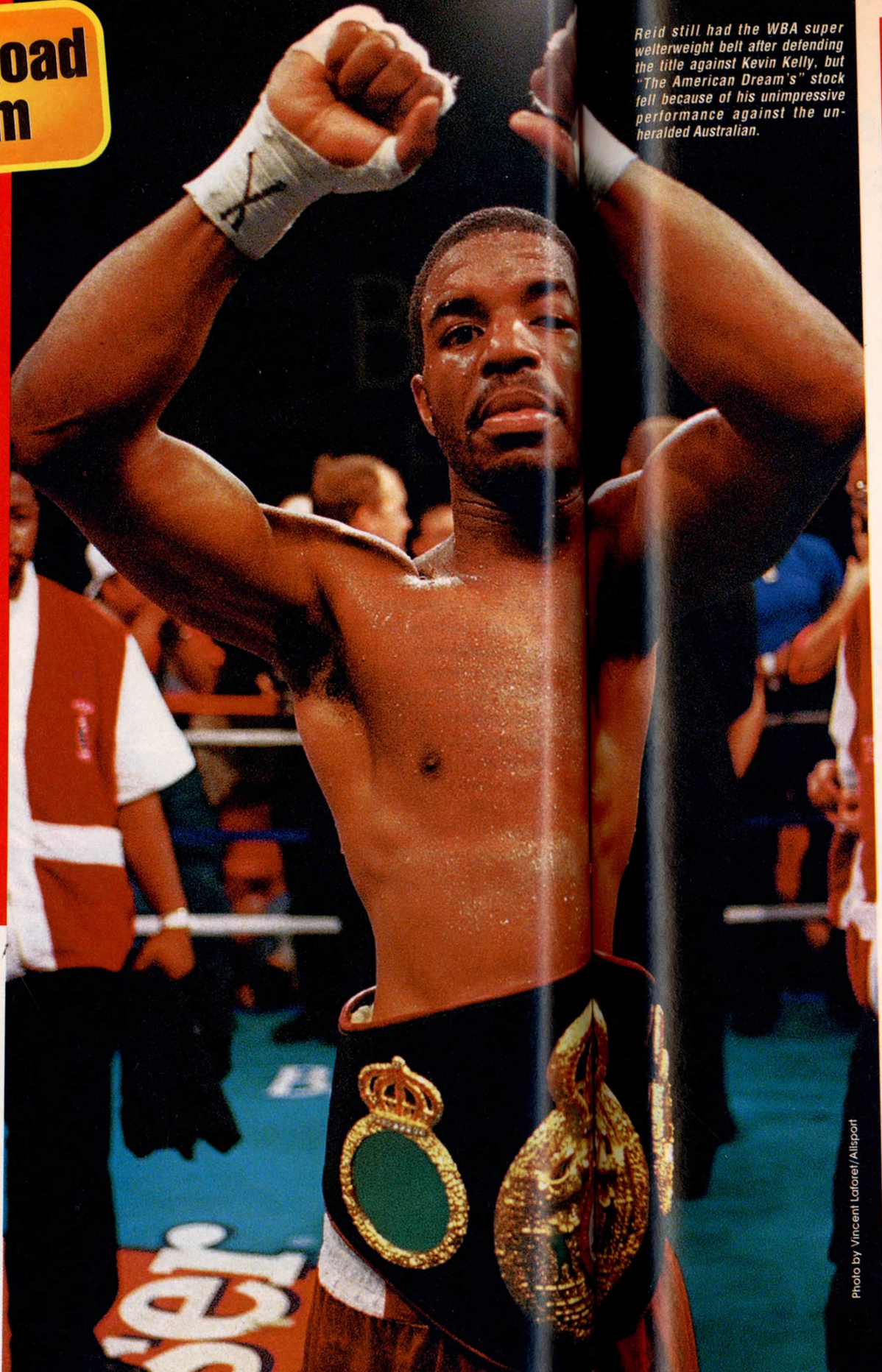
That fight, however, had mirrored a disturbing trend for "The Terminator." He no longer was the fast starter who generally got the job done in a round or two. After evoking comparisons to a young Mike Tyson—who had more early-round stoppages than out-of-court settlements—Tua found himself going into double-digits

(Continued on page 56)

The Golden Road To Stardom

Tenth In A Series

IT'S TIME TO ASK SOME TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT DAVID REID



Reid still had the WBA super welterweight belt after defending the title against Kevin Kelly, but "The American Dream's" stock fell because of his unimpressive performance against the unheralded Australian.

Photo by Vincent Laforet/Allsport

Photo by Vincent Laforet/Allsport

It was a looping left hook that dumped Reid for a brief count toward the end of the fifth round (above), but Kelly's best weapon was the right hand (below), which the defending champion had difficulty avoiding because of the limited vision in his left eye.

Photo by Frank Vitucci

By Nigel Collins

Although he had just recorded his first defense of the WBA super welterweight title via unanimous 12-round decision, David Reid was not wearing his customary smile at the postfight press conference. Instead, boxing's self-proclaimed "smiling dude" looked morose as he sat, picking at imaginary blemishes on the black and gold belt he clutched closely to his chest, perhaps drawing comfort from the fact that the symbol of his office was still in his possession. Next to him, at the podium, Al Mitchell, Reid's trainer/adviser/father-figure, was explaining to the media why his star pupil had looked so unimpressive against Australia's Kevin Kelly, a challenger so lightly regarded that HBO refused to televise the bout.

"Dave has to learn to listen," said Mitchell. "It's only his 13th pro fight, but he's got to learn to listen. He didn't do a lot of the things we worked on in camp. He went out of character. He was dropping his hands and pulling away from the right hand. You don't pull away from an overhand right. And Dave was trying to knock him out. You don't try to knock people out. Knockouts come naturally. You can't force them."

Since becoming the only American boxer to win gold at the 1996 Olympics, Reid was supposed to have been on the fast track to stardom. But his progress has been slowed to a degree by injuries, delays, and less than spectacular performances. First, there was the eye operation to correct his droopy eyelid, the result of an injury incurred at the Pan Am Games. That and several subsequent touch-up surgeries have made his left eye the primary target for every man who enters the ring against him.

The doubts about Reid go beyond the eyelid that invariably drops to half-mast before the conclusion of the first round, and despite going unbeaten in 13 pro

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Reid is a diligent gym worker and is always in top condition, but no amount of training will help his droopy left eyelid. Many believe the impediment will bring a premature end to his career.

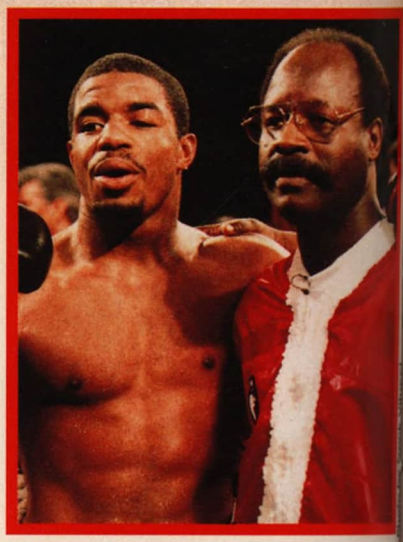
Vargas has proved both a blessing and a curse. The good news is that HBO is planning a high-profile and highly lucrative showdown between the rival 154-pound champs early next year. The bad news is that although Vargas failed to medal in Atlanta and Reid took home the gold, since then, "Ferocious Fernando" has overshadowed Reid by winning a title first and streaking to 17 consecutive knockouts.

But things are seldom quite as clear-cut as they seem on the surface, and in order to delve a little deeper into the enigma that Reid is rapidly becoming, THE RING has asked, and answered, 10 of the most pertinent questions concerning the fighter known as "The American Dream."

Was Kevin Kelly better than advertised, or was Reid as bad as he looked?

While Kelly's number-one rating by the WBA was certainly overly generous, the Koori (Aborigine) from New South Wales was no stiff either. He came into the bout riding a 12-fight winning streak, and his last loss, to Chris Pyatt in December '95, came via controversial decision. And although Kelly isn't a dangerous puncher—just 11 knockout wins in 33 pro bouts—he has never been stopped, and dis-

(Continued on page 60)



Al Mitchell, Reid's longtime trainer and adviser, insists that the eye is not a big problem. But as the opposition gets tougher, evidence mounts that it is indeed a major obstacle.

fights, there a lot of folks who still aren't convinced Reid can live up to the heady expectations that come with a million-dollar signing bonus and an HBO contract. A rivalry with Olympic teammate and IBF junior middleweight champion Fernando

REID GOES DOWN, BUT NOT UNDER

Atlantic City, New Jersey: David Reid rushed out of his corner at the sound of the opening bell and tried to level Kevin Kelly with the first two punches he threw: a range-finding jab, followed by a whistling right to the head. The payoff punch may very well have brought the result he desired had it landed flush. But it didn't, and the Australian challenger, whom Las Vegas oddsmaker Herb Lambeck made a 30-1 underdog, went on to extend the WBA super welterweight champion the entire distance before dropping a unanimous 12-round decision.

The 29-year-old Kelly, 24-6-3 (11), fought pretty much the same way every round, using his long legs to carry him away from the advancing champion, retreating first in one direction, and then in another. But just as it seemed that the unheralded Australian would never throw a serious punch, he'd stop suddenly and wing a shot or two at his pursuer. Kelly landed a decent right of his own in the second, but after four rounds of running, he was falling steadily behind. That changed in the fifth when he clipped an inattentive Reid with a left hook that dropped the embarrassed champion on the seat of his red velvet trunks. Unhurt, Reid bounced back up well inside American referee Tony Orlando's count and finished the round without further mishap.

"It didn't feel like I hit him flush," said Kelly. "It was more of a slap than a punch."

Reid landed enough to win

Kelly, who suffered a cut beneath his left eye in the eighth, never really threatened again, but he kept things close by constantly frustrating Reid's efforts to put him away. Reid repeatedly urged his challenger to "Come on, [and fight]," but Kelly never took the bait, resolutely sticking to his fight plan no matter what the champion said or did. Reid, 153, scored well at times, particularly in the sixth (a solid comeback round), eighth, and 11th, but never put together enough punches to bring down his back-pedaling prey, though he did succeed in pounding the area around Kelly's left eye purple by the time the final bell rang.

Kelly's cornermen hoisted him onto their shoulders at the end of the 12th, but there was no protest when the verdict went to Reid. Judge Henk Meijers (Netherlands) scored it 115-112, while John Stewart (USA) and Marcial Vargas (Venezuela) both had it 116-111. THE RING had Reid squeaking by with a narrow 115-114 margin.

"I know everybody was looking for a knockout, but Kevin Kelly was a very, very tough Australian," said Reid, 13-0 (7). "The most important thing is that I got the win."

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★ Willie Pep
★ "Marvelous" Marvin Hagler
★ Ken Norton
★ David Reid
★ Virgil Hill
★ Kid Gavilan
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By Pete Ehrmann

They both came to Detroit from Alabama at an early age, but anyone who would have predicted early on that Johnny Summerlin would be considered the best heavyweight out of the Motor City since Joe Louis would have been a bigger laughing stock at Northeastern High than Summerlin.

Even though at 220 pounds his was the largest body in the student body, "the little guys at school beat up on me all the time," recalled the former heavyweight contender, now 67 and still a Detroiter. "My sister, Madeline, had to take care of me most of the time because I wouldn't fight nobody."

Teeing off on the big wussy was the favorite extra-curricular activity of the other kids. "There was this guy, Charles Thompson, he always waited in the sweet shop across the street from school," recalled Summerlin. "He'd tell the girls, 'See that big guy? I'm going to go slap him.' And he did, and I wouldn't do nothing about it."

Summerlin wanted to be a basketball player, but when the Lilliputians made a sport out of slam-dunking him, he decided it was time to "go and learn how to box just to beat these little guys up." So he checked in at the Motor City Gym, Detroit's premier fistic finishing school.

"I didn't have no intention of being a fighter," he remembered. "But I got to liking it."

Even so, initially, Summerlin didn't do much better in the ring than outside of it. He had four amateur bouts and lost all but one of them.

"I just couldn't fight amateur," he said. "I trained at a professional gym with professional fighters, and finally I just said, 'If I'm going to fight, I might as well fight for money.'"

But first, Summerlin extracted a promise from his trainer, Ted McWhorter. "If I get to look like some of the old guys in the gym, who come in and punch the bag in their street clothes, just take my stuff and give it to somebody else," he said.

Considering that two of Summerlin's amateur losses had been to a local heavyweight named Harvey Mack, the latter's selection as his first professional opponent on August 2, 1950, seems like an odd one in this age when careers are launched and winning records artfully crafted on a foundation of cream-puffs. But Summerlin's manager, Frank Loftus, was never interested in coddling his fighter.

"He took all the guys nobody else wanted to fight," Summerlin claimed. "He was proud of it. *He* didn't care who I fought. All the fights I had was the kind nobody else wanted."

The score Summerlin settled with Mack via four-round decision settled something else as far as Summerlin was concerned.

"If I hadn't beat him," he said, "I wasn't going to fight no more."

Summerlin finished that year with seven wins and no defeats, knocking out his last five opponents. Not surprisingly, Charles Thompson and Summerlin's other tormentors went into permanent hiding.

"I never got to beat up on none of them," said Summerlin, sounding disappointed still.

But he made do with the opposition at hand, and remained undefeated until light heavyweight contender Westbury Bascom put 13 stitches over his left eye in the second round of their fight at Chicago Stadium in May '51, winning by a technical knockout.

By the time he was drafted into the U.S. Army in the spring of '52, right after a fierce eight-round draw with Bob Johnson, Summerlin was 16-1-2. Nine of his victims had bitten the dust, including Canadian heavyweight champion Vern Escow.

"I wasn't a terrific puncher, although I had lots of kayos," Summerlin explained. "I was in between a boxer and a fighter. My

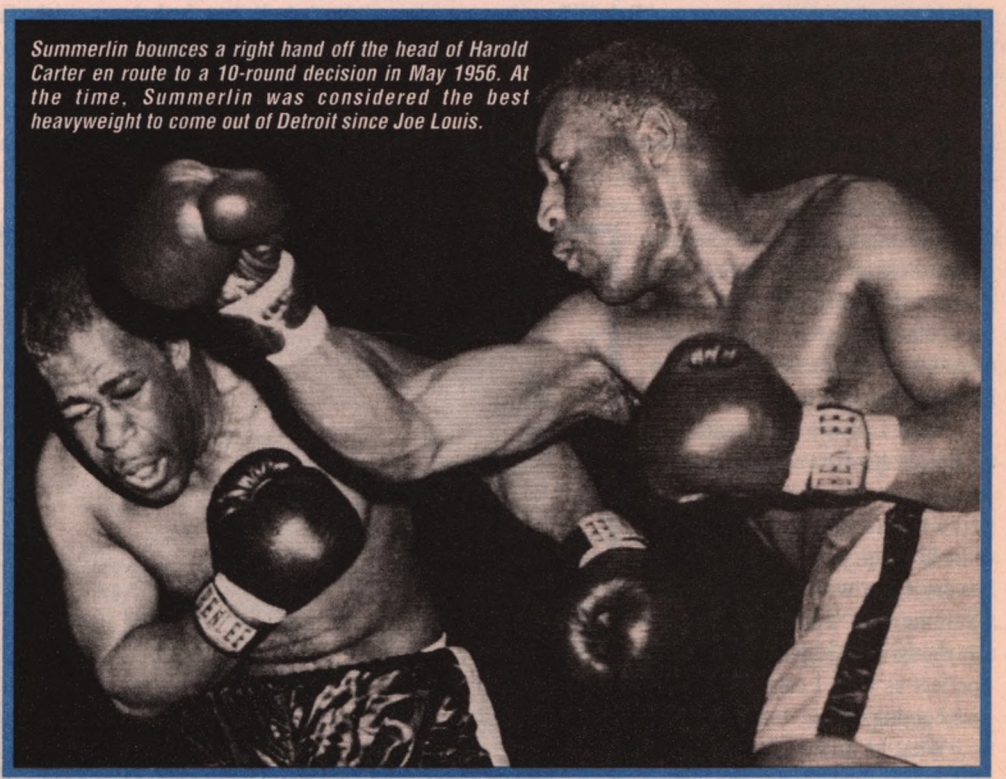
HEAVYWEIGHT JOHNNY SUMMERLIN

Was He Really The First To Beat Sonny Liston?

knockouts came from combinations of punches."

The Army thought enough of his talents to make Summerlin a full-time boxing coach for the length of his two-year hitch. While he trained teams of Army boxers in Japan, Summerlin started hearing about a new Detroit heavyweight named Oscar Pharo who was cutting a wide swath back home. "You better watch for this guy," wrote a friend, "he's pretty tough."

Pharo was booked to fight Canada's James J. Parker in Windsor, across the border from Detroit, when the latter pulled out five days before the May 11, 1954 date. Summerlin was back home then, and in spite of not having fought in over a year, he went in against Pharo on short notice and re-staked his claim as, in the words of THE RING's Michigan correspondent, Jack Waina, "one of the finest prospects in the heavyweight division here since Joe Louis was produced," by knocking out Pharo in the fourth. In a rematch a month later, Summerlin was twice as quick about it, belting Pharo out in two.



Summerlin bounces a right hand off the head of Harold Carter en route to a 10-round decision in May 1956. At the time, Summerlin was considered the best heavyweight to come out of Detroit since Joe Louis.

Once bullied by everybody, Summerlin was no longer afraid of anybody. That included a hulking head-breaker from St. Louis who had been named THE RING's heavyweight "Prospect of the Month" just

Summerlin is flanked by manager Frank Loftus (left) and trainer Ted McWhorter. Loftus didn't believe in pampering his fighters, and turned Summerlin pro against a fighter who had beaten him twice in the amateurs. Summerlin won that bout and finished his first year with a 7-0 record.

before he fought Summerlin at the Motor City Arena, 21 days after the second Pharo fight.

On Summerlin's record, he is listed as Charley Liston. And 45 years later, what sticks in Summerlin's mind about Liston was the ominous look that struck fear in the hearts of so many opponents. "Baleful" would become the sportswriters' favorite adjective to describe it, but to Summerlin it was just weird.

"They brought him in [to Detroit], and I was the favorite to win," Summerlin said. "What I remember most of all was that his expression never changed, regardless of what punches I hit him with. He stared all the time, just that same stare. I can see that expression on his face now. It was a stare you can't forget."

What Liston's face could do to a mirror, his fists could do to your face. Especially the left. Even just five fights into his pro career, "he'd stop you in your tracks every time with that jab," said Summerlin. "I never been with anybody who jabbed as strong and perfect as him. I can still see that jab coming now."

What he still can't see is how the judges made Liston the winner of their fight.

"Nobody believed it," Summerlin said of the decision that went against him after eight rounds. "Even the crowd didn't believe how they could take that fight away from me."

In his report for THE RING, Waina expressed his own incomprehension.

"Every once in a while you watch a fight that after the official decision is announced, you can't help but feel that perhaps some of the advance publicity even had swayed the arbiters," he wrote. "Such was the case when Johnny Summerlin, 193, spotted his highly billed foe, Charley 'Sonny' Liston, 13 pounds and lost a most puzzling verdict.

"The bout itself was as torrid as any seen here in several years. But by having scored more often with the cleaner and more effective punches, veteran observers were 100 percent in favor of Summerlin. Decisions of this type I'll never understand, but a rematch has already been signed."

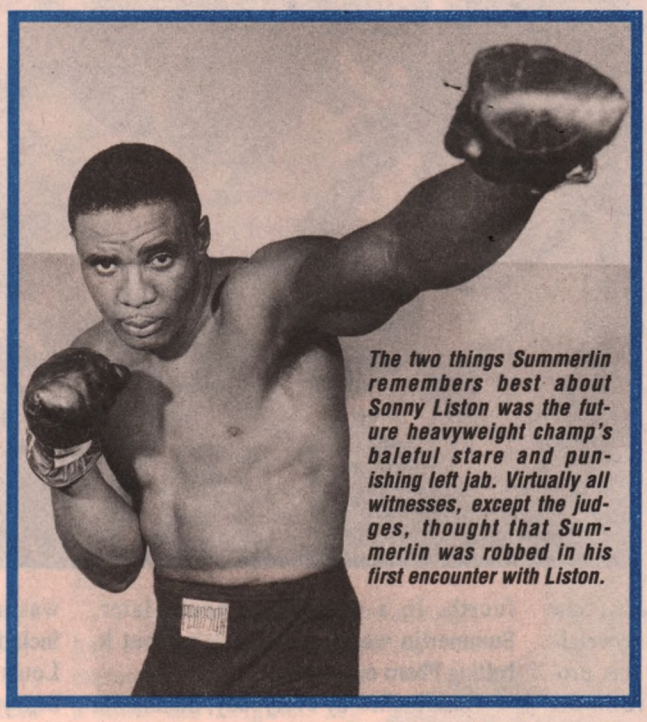
Six weeks later, Summerlin entered the Motor City Arena ring with a decided handicap. His nose had been fractured in a recent sparring session—"and in with a guy who jabbed like Liston," Summerlin said, "oh, man!"

After eight more rounds of brutal trading, Liston left town with a split-decision win, and still undefeated. The hometown fighter says he got taken, all right, but not in the ring.

"I should've won one of the fights, no doubt," said Summerlin. "Sonny won both of them, and in my hometown. But the people upstairs took care of that. There was no way for Liston to come from out of town and beat me twice in my hometown."

Liston won the heavyweight title eight years later, knocking out Floyd Patterson in the first round.

"I wasn't surprised," said Summerlin. "It's just that he was in and out of jail so much, I didn't know how he was going to keep the title. Had he stayed out of jail, Liston could've been a great fighter. When you're fighting you gotta stay out of trouble, and he couldn't."

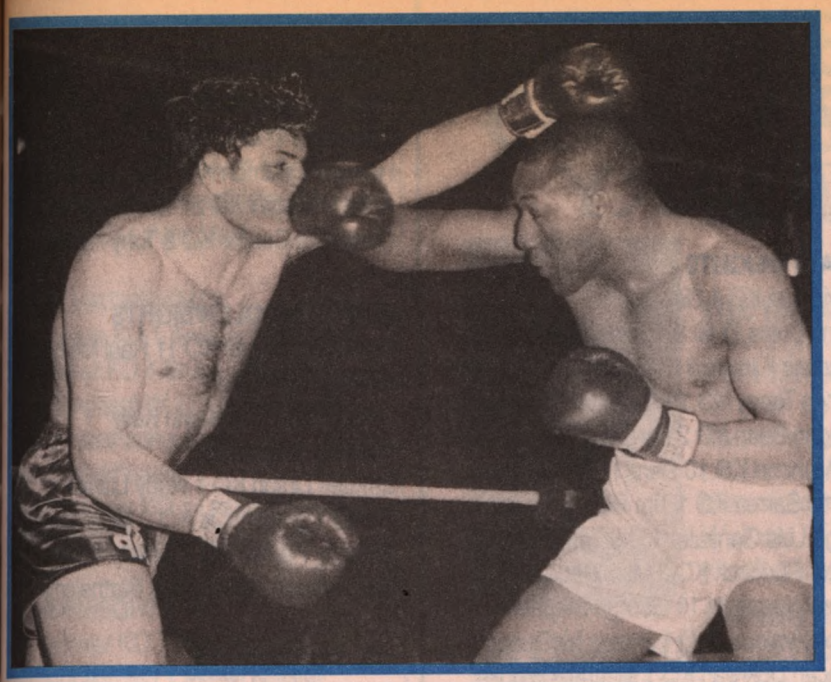


The two things Summerlin remembers best about Sonny Liston was the future heavyweight champ's baleful stare and punishing left jab. Virtually all witnesses, except the judges, thought that Summerlin was robbed in his first encounter with Liston.

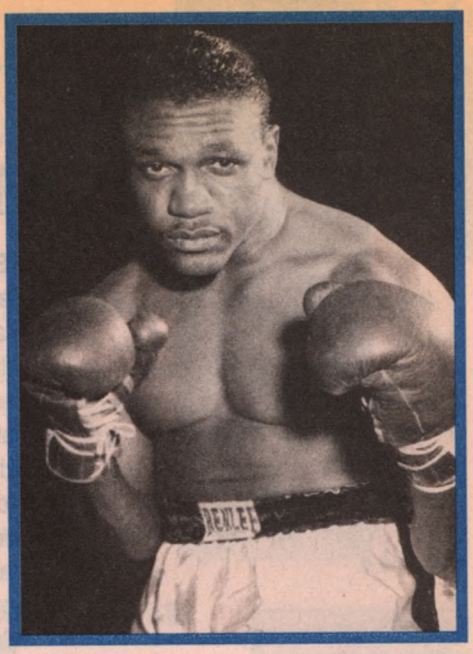
As for Summerlin, after losing what Waina described as "strictly an alley brawl all the way" to George Powell for the Michigan state title, he won his next four, three by knockout, and then headed to California. There the onetime basketball hopeful won his biggest boxing match by throwing a former professional football star for a big loss.

Ex-San Francisco 49er Charlie Powell had caused lots of excitement using his linebacker's power to crunch 10 of his 14 ring opponents.

"He was knocking everybody out, and I was supposed to get knocked out, too," said Summerlin. "But I never cared



After serving two years in the U.S. Army as a boxing coach, Summerlin returned home to Michigan and knocked out local hotshot Oscar Pharo in four rounds to regain his status as one of the world's top heavyweight prospects. Summerlin kayoed Pharo again a month later.



Among Summerlin's well-known victims was Charlie Powell, the former San Francisco 49er who gave up the gridiron for a boxing career. Summerlin knocked out Powell in the sixth round.

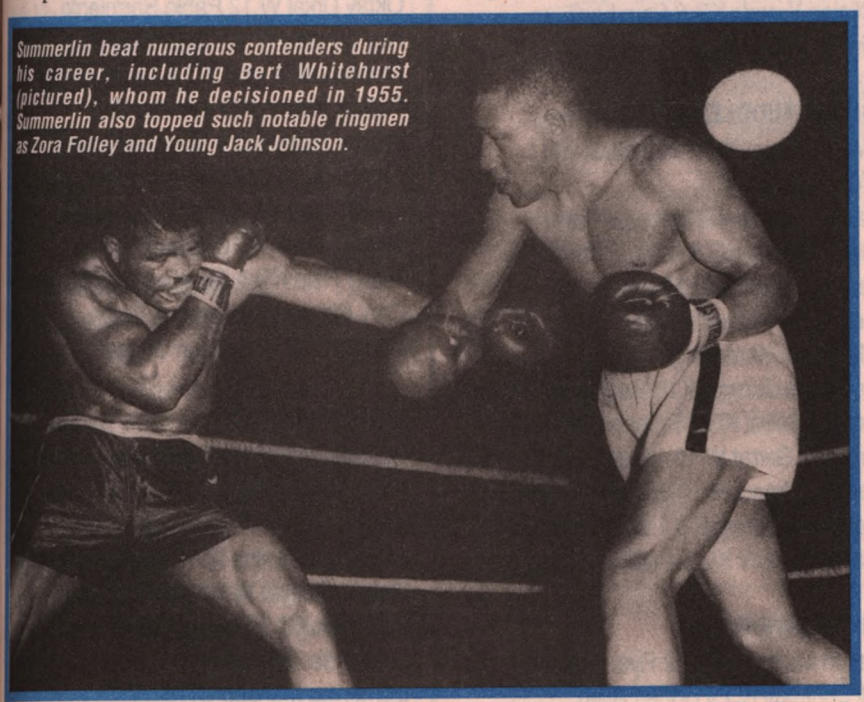
too much about a puncher. I'd rather fight a puncher than a boxer. All the punchers I fought, they didn't take punches too good. When you get inside and let 'em know you're not going to stand back and let 'em knock you out, they give up."

Powell went out in six rounds on April 14, 1955, and in an interview 41 years later offered graphic testimony to the success of Summerlin's strategy.

"I pissed blood for about a week, the bodyshots he was giving me," Powell recalled.

Future world title challenger Zora Folley was undefeated in 19 bouts, but "he was no problem at all," said Summerlin, who knocked Folley down three times and out in the sixth round in Los Angeles.

But there was a problem in the large form and flapping gums of a man born John Lee Storey, who called himself Young Jack Johnson. Next to him, Liston and everybody else he fought, including even Charles Thompson, are pleasant memories for Summerlin. In just his eighth fight, Johnson upset world-ranked Willie Bean to win the California state heavyweight belt and his own place in the top 10. He and Summerlin fought twice in the mid-'50s, and the memory is indelible.



Summerlin beat numerous contenders during his career, including Bert Whitehurst (pictured), whom he decisioned in 1955. Summerlin also topped such notable ringmen as Zora Folley and Young Jack Johnson.

"I never think about those other guys I fought," said Summerlin. "I just think about Johnson."

Just trying to describe the man he recalls as "the toughest fighter I ever fought" rendered Summerlin almost speechless. "He was just ... I don't know what you call him," he said. "I call him lots of things. He was just an ugly ... I can't express it."

Expressing things was no problem for Johnson.

"He did more damage to me talking than fighting," Summerlin said. "He was horrible. He talked about my mother and my baby sister, and how he was gonna knock me out. And this was inside the ring!"

Johnson may have had the edge forensically, but the decisions in both of their fights went to Summerlin.

"My greatest accomplishment was to have him on the floor in the second fight, on February 23, 1956," Summerlin said.

(Continued on page 64)

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
David Tua KO 1 Gary Bell
Frans Botha D 10 Shannon Briggs
Wladimir Klitschko KO 4 Joseph Chingangu
James Toney KO 10 Adolpho Washington
Vaughn Bean KO 2 Lorenzo Boyd
Ed Mahone KO 10 Derrick Banks
Monte Barrett KO 1 Tim Ray
Jorge Luis Gonzalez KO 9 Tommy Martin
Razor Ruddock KO 8 Mike Sedillo
Kenny Keene W 10 George Stephens
Nikolai Valouev KO 1 James McQueen
Duncan Dokiwari KO 1 Matthew Brooks
Nate Jones W 8 Wesley Martin
Butterbean KO 2 Tim Burgoon
Butterbean D 4 Jason Farley

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Juan Carlos Gomez KO 6 Bruce Scott
(Retains WBC Title)
Robert Daniels KO 10 Derek Amos
David Telesco KO 5 Hector Sanjurjo
Darren Corbett KO 2 Darren Ashton

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Derrick Harmon W 12 Ray Berry
Clinton Woods KO 6 Sam Leuii
Jim Crawford W 10 Joe Hughes

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
William Joppy KO 1 Napoleon Pitt
(Non-Title Bout)
Jaffa Ballogou KO 2 Pascal David
Omar Sheika KO 8 Kevin Pompey
James Butler KO 2 Merqui Sosa
Andrei Schkalikov KO 9
Alexander Kamensky
Fernando Zuniga KO 1 Reginaldo Andrade
Branco Sobot KO 6 Francis Fofoh
Frederic Serrat W 10 Olivier Beard
Tarick Salmaci W 10 Bruce Rumbolz
Scott Pemberton KO 1 Billy Rollins
Randie Carver KO 2 Patrick Swann

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Jason Matthews KO 2 Ryan Rhodes
Ali Ennebati KO 9 Robert Allen
Wilfredo Rivera KO 1 Jimmy Morgan
Darren Maciunski W 8 Benji Singleton
Mamadou Thiam KO 3 Robert Muhammad
Howard Eastman KO 6 Teimouraz Kikelidze
Akira Ohigashi KO 2 Florence Galicia
Cleveland Corder KO 2 Tony Kern

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Fernando Vargas KO 11 Raul Marquez
(Retains IBF Title)
David Reid W 12 Kevin Kelly
(Retains WBA Title)
Emmett Linton KO 1 Rudy Lovato
Hector Camacho Jr. KO 2 Mike Cooley
Anthony Farnell KO 3 Israel Ponce
Kofi Jantuah W 8 Giorbis Barthelemy

WELTERWEIGHTS
James Page KO 11 Freddie Pendleton
(Retains WBA Title)
Shannan Taylor KO 3 Lonnie Beasley
Julio Cesar Chavez KO 4 Marty Jakubowski
Mickey Ward KO 5 Jermal Corbin
David Kamau KO 9 Edgar Ruiz
Andrew Lewis KO 4 Alex Lubo
Derek Roche W 12 Georgie Smith

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Terronn Millett KO 12 Virgil McClendon
(Retains IBF Title)
Rafael Ruelas W 10 Hicklet Lau
Oktay Urkal W 12 Pablo Sarmiento
Ray Oliveira W 10 Cihat Salman
Emmanuel Burton KO 8 Terrell Finger
Patrick Thorns KO 4 Andre Cray
Wayne Rigby KO 4 Mark McGowan
Ener Julio KO 2 Robinson Torres
Junichi Ono W 10 Masayuki Uchida
Andre Reyes W 10 Gilbert Quiroz
Teddy Reid KO 4 Terrance Cauthen
Cory Spinks W 10 Verdell Smith
Daniel Attah W 6 Eldon Sneed

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Stefano Zoff W 12 Julien Lorcy
(Wins WBA Title)
Derrick Gainer W 10 Freddy Cruz
John-John Molina W 10 James Crayton
Gabriel Ruelas W 10 Jose Rodriguez
Billy Irwin KO 2 Shawn Simmons
Leavander Johnson KO 4
Domenico Monaco

Wilfrido Ruiz W 8 Gustavia Tapia
Genaro Rios KO 1 Marlon Balladeras
Frankie Toledo KO 2 Raheem Stone
Yuji Watanabe KO 2 Siengthipya Sitsyasei
Calvin Davis KO 1 Felix Marti

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Acelino Freitas KO 1 Anatoly Alexandrov
Jesus Chavez KO 4 Bruno Rabanales
Charles Shepherd W 12 Tom Johnson
Yodsanan Nanthachai D 12
Sukhee Nemekhbayar
Tontcho Tontchev KO 1 Laszlo Bognar
Dean Pithie KO 2 Andrew Matabola

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Augie Sanchez KO 7 Nestor Lopez
Steve Robinson KO 1 Martin Krastev
Gutty Espadas KO 1 Prangky Mamuaya
Kazu Arisawa W 10 Toshihara Saotome
Takashi Koshimoto KO 6 Dodong Basalo

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Erik Morales KO 6 Reynante Jamili
(Retains WBC Title)
Marco Antonio Barrera W 12
Pastor Maurin
Michael Brodie KO 12 Serge Poilblan
Kozo Ishii KO 1 Dino Olivetti
Israel Vazquez KO 7 Nelson Medina
Shin Yamato KO 4 Sungpyo Hong
Jess Maca W 10 Taiji Okamoto
Toshiaki Nishioka KO 4
Yodsingh Chuwatana

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Cuauhtemoc Gomez KO 8 Luis Benavides
Akihiko Nago KO 3 Jun Magsipuc

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Hideki Todaka W 12 Jesus Rojas
(Wins WBA Title)
Eric Morel KO 1 Francisco Espitia
Diego Morales KO 8 Ysaias Zamudio
Michael Carbajal KO 4 Oscar Calzada
Francisco Tejedor W 10 Ubalde Soto

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Dave Coldwell KO 5 Terrace Gaskin
Nico Thomas KO 3 Yosuke Kobayashi

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Michael Carbajal KO 11 Jorge Arce

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Fortunately for IBF junior middleweight champion Vargas, the Fighter of the Month does not necessarily have to be the Humanitarian of the Month, so the charges he's facing for his alleged involvement in an assault with a deadly weapon just a week after his successful defense against Raul Marquez do not preclude him from capturing this month's honor. In any case, it's hard to envision Vargas being much more dangerous with any weapon than he was with his fists against Marquez.

Granted, the defense-impaired, cut-prone Marquez may have been tailor-made for Vargas to look good against, but he was still an ex-champion, a former Olympian, and a credible challenger. But he could never touch the 21-year-old titlist, and Vargas' cool, patient attack finally led to the 17th straight knockout of his young career when Marquez was saved by referee Joe Cortez in the 11th. It seems Vargas isn't exactly shaping up to be boxing's number-one role model, but inside the ring, so far anyway, he can do no wrong.

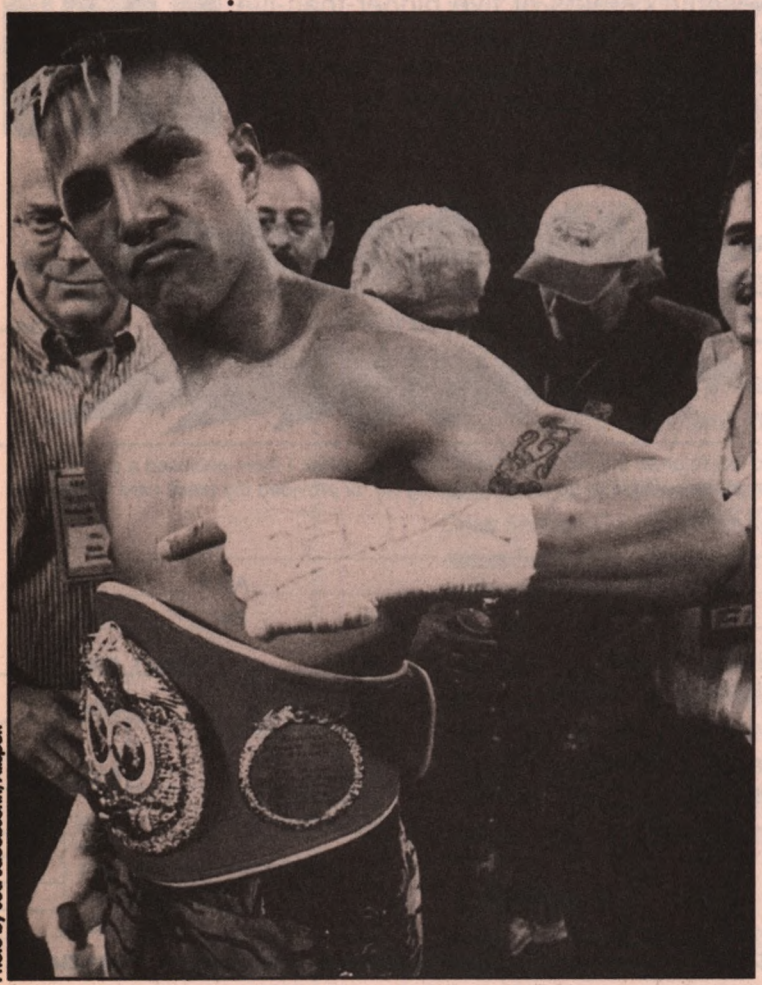

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

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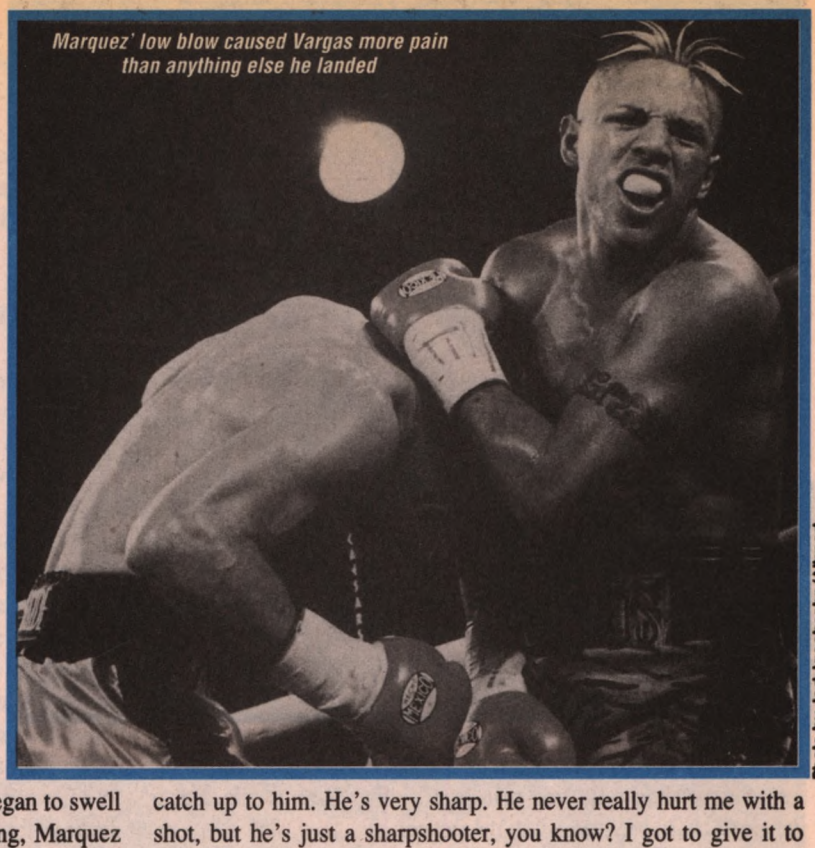
Fernando Vargas

Fernando Vargas KO 11 Raul Marquez



Marquez' low blow caused Vargas more pain than anything else he landed

Photo by Jed Jacobsohn/Allsport

Lake Tahoe, Nevada: If only the fight had been as heated and competitive as the war of words leading up to it, Vargas' IBF junior middleweight title defense against former champ Marquez would have been a Fight of the Year candidate.

"He's overrated, and I'm going to expose him," Marquez said. "You can hit him with your eyes closed," Vargas shot back. Marquez presented Vargas with an Oscar De La Hoya T-shirt, and the champion threw it back at him and told him he'd need it to wipe the blood out of his mouth. Marquez flexed his biceps for Vargas at the weigh-in, and Vargas shoved the challenger, and had to be restrained from beginning the fight a day early. It was all great build-up to the 21-year-old Vargas' second defense, but, as most expected, the fight didn't come close to equaling the hype.

From the opening round, Marquez, 153, Houston, Texas, proved to be just as easy to hit as Vargas, 154, Oxnard, California, suspected. Vargas scored with a solid hook, then a pair of straight lead rights, and the tender-skinned challenger had a small cut over his left eye by round's end. That eye began to swell in the second, and, wary of Vargas' pinpoint punching, Marquez was doing little more than jabbing and backpedaling. The champ's straight right was doing damage to the head and the body in the third, and the fight remained completely one-sided until the southpaw Marquez finally began to produce some offense in the fifth. He scored with a smooth right-left combination, and his jabs were landing with some consistency, but he also picked up a cut near his right eye in the stanza.

Early in the sixth, an apparently unintentional, but decidedly damaging left hand to the groin from Marquez caused Vargas to drop to his knees in agony, and referee Joe Cortez (USA) elected to take a point from the 27-year-old challenger—though he was already so far behind on the scorecards that one point seemed unlikely to make a difference. Both fighters opened up when the action resumed, but Marquez was still getting the worse end of most exchanges. Vargas grew cocky and dropped his hands tauntingly in the seventh, and Marquez responded with an excellent right to the rib cage. He scored with a few more bodyshots in the ninth, but Vargas came back with a one-two that stunned the ex-champ.

Just when it seemed that Vargas, 17-0 (17), might have to go the distance for the first time in his career, he unloaded a quick right-left in the 11th that caused the gritty challenger to wobble back into the ropes. Vargas tagged Marquez with a combination, and the lumped up '92 Olympic silver medalist staggered across the ring, only to take more punishment on the opposite side. Marquez, 30-2 (20), refused to go down, but Cortez wisely called a stoppage at the 2:00 mark. Marquez, who said that he intended to retire following the one-sided loss, had nothing but respectful words for his young conqueror with whom he'd done so much trash-talking beforehand.

"The guy's good … real good," Marquez said. "I could never catch up to him. He's very sharp. He never really hurt me with a shot, but he's just a sharpshooter, you know? I got to give it to him. He's better than I thought he was."

The talk for Vargas immediately turned to his likely showdown next spring with fellow 154-pound champion and Olympic teammate David Reid, whom "Ferocious Fernando" has been relatively reluctant to badmouth.

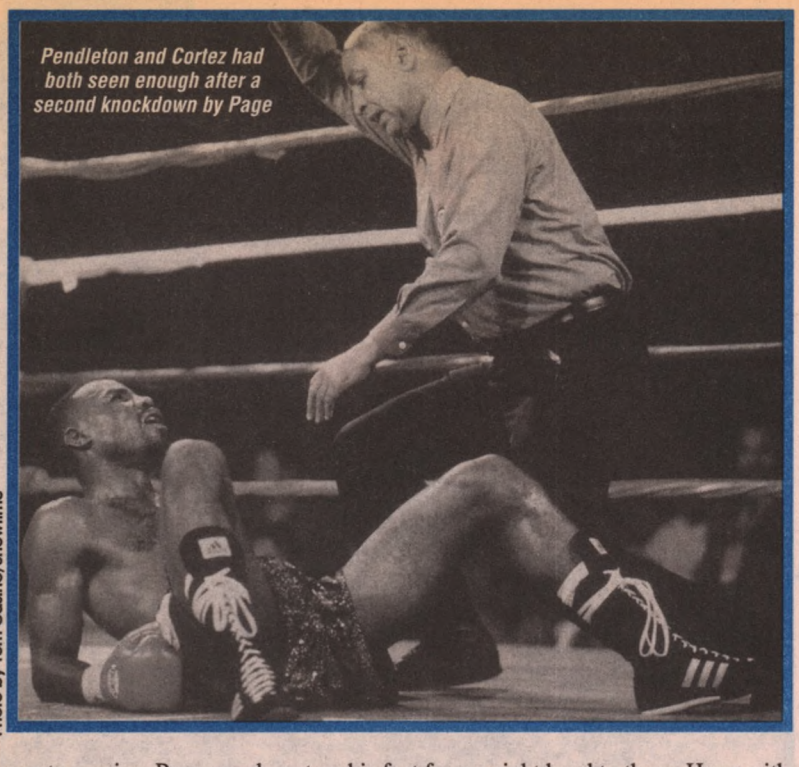
"I think David Reid's a great fighter and a very good guy," Vargas said. "I like David Reid. But he's a champion, too. I want to be the best champion in this division, and to do that, I have to fight fighters like David Reid. It's nothing personal. This is business. He's got something I want, and I know I got something he wants."

First, as long as his July arrest for investigation of assault *(see "Round One" for details)* doesn't stall his career, it looks like Vargas will be making a mandatory defense in October or November against tricky veteran southpaw Winky Wright, his mandatory challenger. The fight will part of an HBO doubleheader co-headlined by Reid.

Television: HBO
Promoter: Main Events
(7-17-99)

James Page KO 11 Freddie Pendleton

Las Vegas, Nevada: Page, admittedly always looking for an early knockout, settled into some slick boxing and used heavy combinations late to finally dispose of Pendleton at 2:25 of the 11th round in retaining the WBA welterweight title in the first ever pro card at the Flamingo Hilton hotel-casino. Page, 147, Sacramento, California, actually drew more heat from his new trainer, former welterweight champ Buddy McGirt, than he did from Pendleton, 146½, Miami, Florida, particularly after the ninth round when the champion twice tackled the challenger to the can-



Pendleton and Cortez had both seen enough after a second knockdown by Page

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

vas to survive. Page, nearly out on his feet from a right hand to the jaw before they fell, was still dazed going back to his corner where McGirt was ready with the riot act.

"James was confused early, he couldn't make up his mind whether he was going to slug or box, even though he was dominating the action," McGirt said. "Pendleton only won the second and ninth rounds, but I asked Page if he was trying to blow his title. Page showed a great jab in training, but it wasn't there until the late rounds."

Page, 28, earning $150,000 in his third defense of the crown, controlled most of the first eight rounds, and made it clear in the 10th and 11th rounds that he would scuttle the game efforts of Pendleton, 36, to go the distance. At the outset of the 10th round, Page, 25-3 (19), looked like the fighter who had knocked down Oscar De La Hoya in 1997 when the WBC welterweight champion was training for Wilfredo Rivera. Page quickly backed up Pendleton with the jab and a six-punch salvo of hooks and uppercuts. The bleeding recipient's knees buckled, but he valiantly remained erect.

Page had the crowd roaring in the 11th when he came out and rocked the weary Pendleton with a jolting right. Referee Joe Cortez (USA) did not rule a knockdown when the challenger dropped and popped up again like a rubber ball, but Page continued with some unanswered cannonading, and a fast-fading Pendleton was on the canvas for a seven count. Pendleton, never lacking courage, soon after took a vicious right that knocked him sideways. He was reeling away when the determined champion delivered the coup de grace—a snapping left hook that put Pendleton on the canvas face down. Cortez tolled eight, and then wisely abbreviated the action. The referee later said Pendleton "told me he didn't want to continue and wanted to see a doctor about his eye cuts immediately."

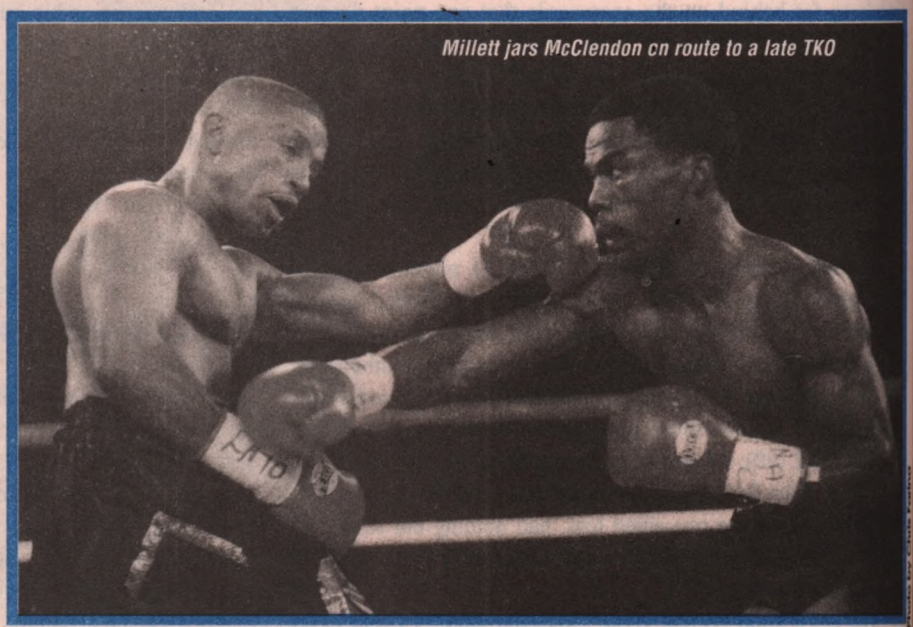
Pendleton, collecting $30,000 as his resume fell to 44-24-4 (32), lauded Page as "a very good champion and maybe the strongest guy I ever fought." Page, meanwhile, turned his attention to the possibility of getting a unification bout with the winner of De La Hoya's megamillion-dollar fight with IBF champion Felix Trinidad.

"From what I've heard lately—win or lose—both De La Hoya and Trinidad will leave the welters and move up to 154 pounds after this fight," Page said. "That doesn't bother me. I'll stay a welterweight, so I can unify the titles, and later on I'll catch up with them at 154. I don't think Top Rank would ever let Oscar fight me anyway. Nobody in that camp has forgotten the day in 1997 at Big Bear. I caught De La Hoya with a left hook. He went down and threw his gloves up to his face. It would probably be better for me if Trinidad wins, because it would be an easy fight for Don King to make."

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Don King Productions
(7-24-99)
Jack Welsh

Terronn Millett KO 12 Virgil McClendon

Las Vegas, Nevada: Millett, only five months into his reign as IBF junior welterweight champion, showed any naysayers there is Gibraltar in his chin when he withstood southpaw McClendon's early fury to retain his laurels with a dramatic 12th-round TKO at



Millett jars McClendon en route to a late TKO

Photo by Chris Farina

the Flamingo Hilton hotel-casino. Millett, 139, St. Louis, Missouri, was making his inaugural defense of the championship he won February 20 with a surprise fifth-round TKO of Vince Phillips in New York City. For McClendon, 139½, Columbus, Ohio, it was his first title shot, and his record dipped to 21-2 (8).

One for boxing's trivia book arrived in the first round when the sole of McClendon's right shoe fell partially off during an exchange.

"I don't know how that could have happened," McClendon said. "A thing like this has never happened before, and I'll admit it distracted me a little bit."

Millett, 22-1-1 (17), slow out of the gate for three rounds, finally had his punching rhythm going by the sixth round, but he was never free of McClendon's unorthodox style of lunging, throwing a hook, and then thwarting the champion with his constant clutching. McClendon's most significant action came in the second round. The ambitious challenger worked inside, ripping hooks and uppercuts to the body. The rivals traded big right hands at midring, but McClendon appeared to wobble the champion with a searing combination to the jaw. The Buckeye State belter then landed two heavy combinations to the head just before the bell.

But Millett turned it around and had an insurmountable lead going by the 10th, and in that round, he poured it on even more with combinations that backed up McClendon. McClendon put up a final charge to open the 11th round, catching Millett with a four-punch flurry and then a big left hook, but the champion hardly blinked. Roaring back, Millett hurt McClendon with two mean combinations to the head and a hook to the body. Just before the bell, Millett landed perhaps his best right of the fight, and McClendon's cornermen came out to lead their man back to his stool.

In the final stanza, Millett was in total sync offensively, raking the rock-ribbed challenger with some punishing artillery. Referee Richard Steele (USA) moved in, watching attentively as McClendon refused to go down. Six more punches landed, and the party was over. Steele saved McClendon at 1:50 of the 12th round.

"This is more important than when I beat Vince Phillips, because that night people were more interested in the fact that he ballooned up to 170 two weeks before the fight," Millett said. "I felt that I was being punished because Phillips waited until the last minute to get his weight down. That was his mistake, and I capitalized on it. It didn't make any difference what Phillips weighed, because the condition I was in, nobody was going to beat me that night. But I feel like I'm still struggling. I want more recognition. Maybe it will come after I unify the 140-pound championship."

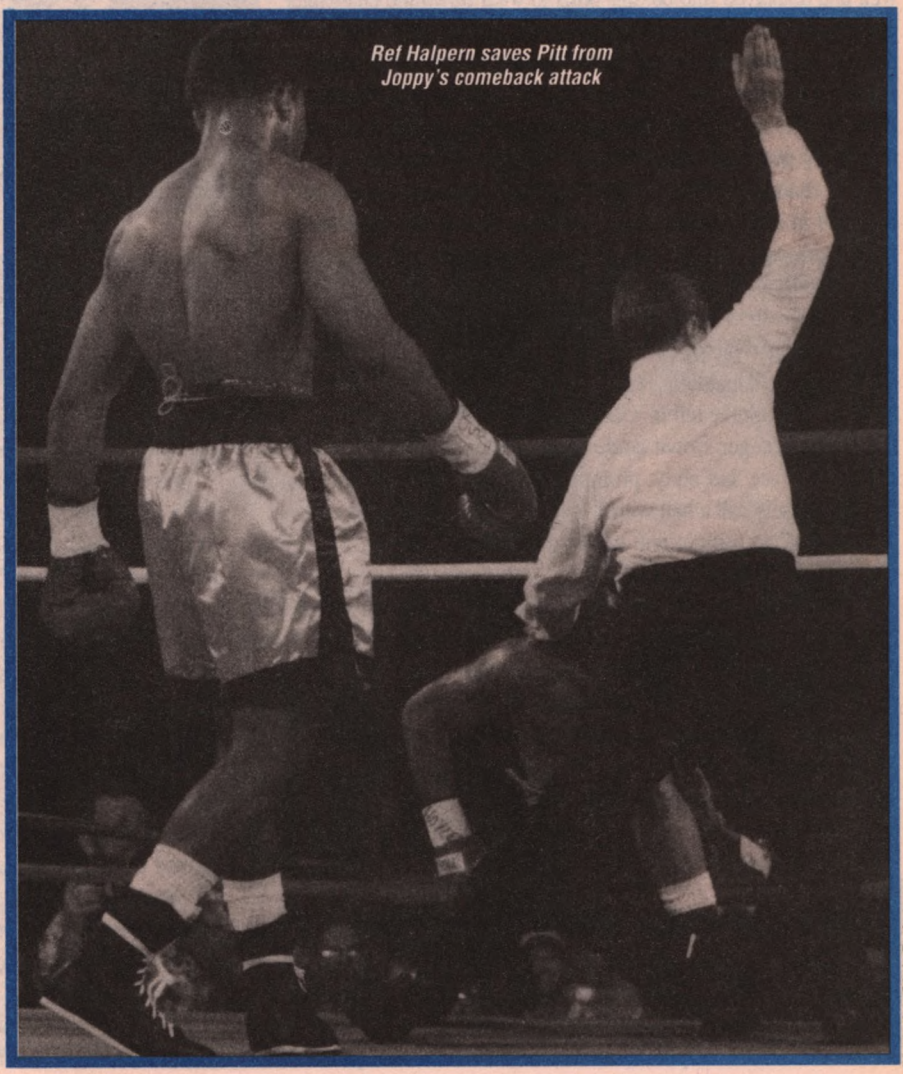
Television: Showtime
Promoter: Don King Productions
(7-24-99)
Jack Welsh

William Joppy KO 1 Napoleon Pitt

Las Vegas, Nevada: WBA middleweight champion Joppy, 164, Silver Springs, Maryland, returned to action for the first time since a January auto crash and TKO'd Pitt, 168½, Richmond, Virginia, at 2:30 of the first round in a scheduled 10-round non-title bout at the Flamingo Hilton hotel-casino. It was the 28-year-old Joppy's first outing since August 28, 1998, when he disposed of the legendary Roberto Duran in three easy rounds.

Joppy, 27-1-1 (21), hardly broke a sweat in destroying the overmatched Pitt, 14-11-1 (8). The champion hammered the Virginian at will with assorted combinations to the head and body. There were no knockdowns, but referee Mitch Halpern (USA) wisely stopped the no-brainer with 30 seconds left in the opening round with Pitt squatting on the bottom ropes.

Joppy, who made just $15,000 for the non-televised bout, had suffered a hairline fracture in his neck and several facial cuts in the car wreck in Maryland. He was delighted to be back in the



Ref Halpern saves Pitt from Joppy's comeback attack

Photo by Chris Farina

ring, and looked fully recovered.

"I knew I was ready to fight," he said. "I wouldn't be in Las Vegas if I wasn't ready to fight and win."

Joppy will turn next to a mandatory defense in September against Julio Cesar Green. The two have already faced each other twice, with Green taking the title from Joppy by a controversial decision in August '97, and Joppy reclaiming the belt by a clear-cut 12-round nod in January '98.

"If I beat Green," Joppy said, "then I'll start looking around to unify the middleweight crown."

Promoter: Don King Productions

(7-24-99)

Jack Welsh

Juan Carlos Gomez KO 6 Bruce Scott

Dusseldorf, Germany: Germany-based Cuban Gomez retained the WBC cruiserweight title with a comprehensive sixth-round stoppage of British-based Jamaican Bruce Scott before a crowd of 4,500 in the Dusseldorfer Phillipshalle. It was the fifth successful title defense for Gomez, who won the crown against Argentinian Marcelo Dominguez in February of 1998.

The fight was mostly one-sided, though Scott, 188½, always tried. But Gomez, 188½, utilized his superior height and reach well and displayed fine boxing skills to wear down the challenger systematically. Scott, giving away 5½" in height to the 6'3" champion, answered the bell to the opening round with an aggressive combination. But the British and Commonwealth champion soon lost his initial determination, as Gomez, 25, began landing repeatedly and presenting an elusive target with his good mobility. The champion rocked Scott twice with uppercuts in the second, and in round three the tall southpaw moved him against the ropes with several right-left combinations. Scott, 29, began to show a badly swollen left eye in the fifth as well as clear signs of increasing frustration as he missed wildly with most of his punches and sustained plenty of firepower in return. Even the few shots Scott could land had little or no effect.

With one minute left in round six, Gomez forced Scott, 21-5 (15), into the challenger's own corner and threw over 20 punches to the Jamaican's face and body, prompting Belgian referee Daniel van de Wiele to wisely call a halt with 14 seconds remaining in the round.

"I felt good tonight and now I'd like to move toward unifying the title," said Gomez, 28-0 (23).

"Originally we wanted Napoleon Tagoe, who just beat the undefeated Cuban Ramon Garbey," promoter Klaus-Peter Kohl explained. "But he pulled out relatively late, so we had to find a replacement. I meet WBA President Gilberto Mendoza tonight, and we are going to talk about a unification fight between Gomez and Fabrice Tiozzo."

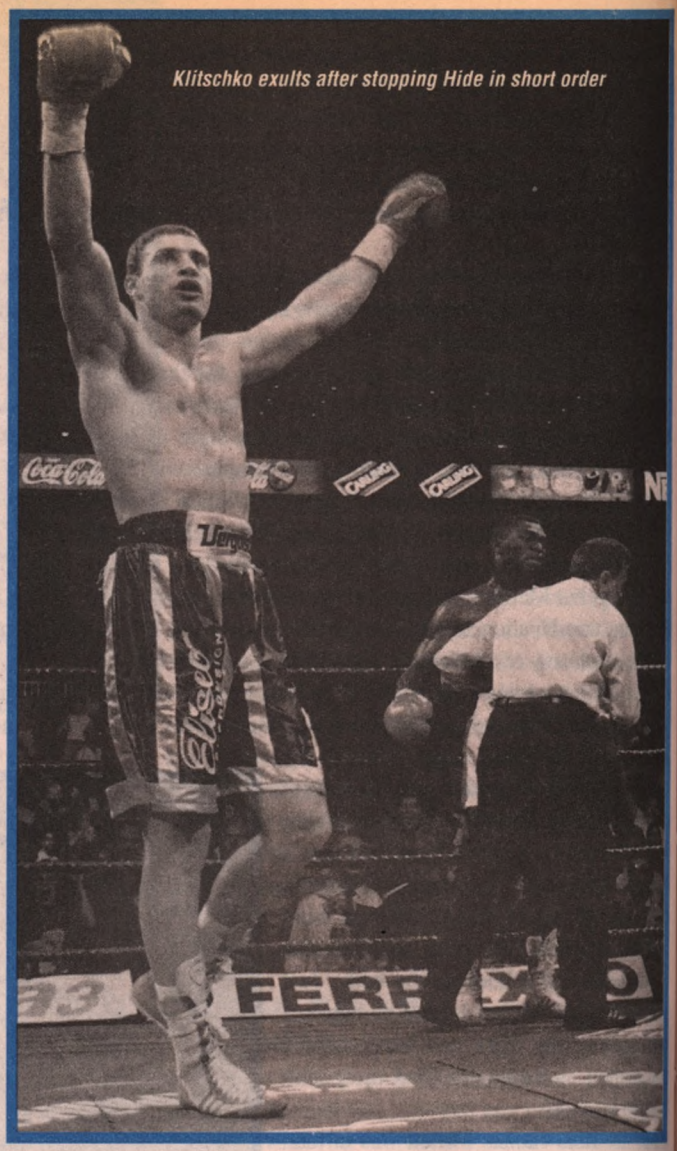
Promoter: Universum Boxing Promotions

(7-18-99)

Brian Doogan

Vitaly Klitschko KO 2 Herbie Hide

London, England: Michael Grant can no longer claim to tower above the current crop of emerging heavyweight contenders. That distinction now belongs to 6'8" German-based Ukrainian Klitschko, whose emphatic second-round demolition job on former Riddick Bowe victim Hide at the London Arena garnered him the spurious WBO title.



Klitschko exults after stopping Hide in short order

An interest in politics and language that led to his graduation from the University of Kiev means that Klitschko is not merely an Ivan Drago-style fighting machine. But inside the ropes, he does a pretty handy impression. Hide's prefight insistence that "Klitschko is tall, big, strong, but very clumsy" proved as far off the mark as the 27-year-old Briton was on the night with most of his wild, ineffective blows. Klitschko, 27, simply never gave him a chance, extending a telephone pole-like left jab that Hide could not counter, setting up the destructive blows that immobilized "The Dancing Destroyer."

Almost 200,000 people congregated in the open air around a large screen erected in the center of Kiev to cheer their fighter on, and they were not disappointed. From the opening bell, Hide, 31-2 (30), moved to his left, in and out, pulling his head up and back as he glided into range. It was a flawed tactic that illustrated his poor preparation and mental instability. Klitschko, 25-0 (25), moved well to cut off the ring, coolly evading the crude bursts Hide threw in his general direction.

Showing signs of frustration early in the second round as he continued to miss his towering opponent, Hide set himself up for disaster.

He retreated toward the ropes, where Klitschko, 246, unleashed a powerful right to the jaw that sent the Englishman tumbling. Though he beat the count of referee Genaro Rodriguez (USA), he was clearly in deep trouble. Almost in desperation, he went after Klitschko, but the Ukrainian maintained his poise. Two consecutive left-right combinations, the final right not even connecting, knocked Hide to the canvas again, and though he just managed to beat the count, the referee wisely called a halt at the 1:14 mark.

"First we destroyed, now we go dancing," cried an exuberant Klaus-Peter Kohl, Klitschko's promoter, a reference to Hide's nickname. "Hide did not seem to take Vitaly too seriously, but I think he and a few others will after this. Vitaly will defend the WBO belt maybe a couple of times in Germany, and then we want to take on the best. We know that Vitaly can beat every heavyweight in the world today."

Promoter: Frank Warren
(6-26-99)
Brian Doogan

Zab Judah KO 1 David Sample

Hyannis, Massachusetts: Junior welterweight phenom Judah struck with stunning quickness, dropping Sample four times for a TKO victory just 2:27 into the first round before a capacity crowd of 2,300 at the Cape Cod Melody Tent.

Veteran Sample, 26-6-1 (10), was supposed to offer Judah, 21-0 (16) with 1 no-contest, the kind of legitimate challenge his previous 20 victims had failed to provide. "He's never fought anybody as loose and slick as me before," said Sample, who, going in, was seen as nearly Judah's equal in terms of boxing skills and hand speed. But after the first bell rang, Judah proved that his speed and footwork put him in a class by himself.

For a brief moment, it seemed like Sample, 142, might be able to compete with the Brooklyn southpaw. But Judah's nifty movement allows him to dart in, land a devastating volley, and then escape before his opponent can react. He used this technique to perfection against Sample, and a hard left cross dropped the Las Vegas resident for the first time at the 1:13 mark.

Sample arose after referee Ed Fitzgerald's count reached four, but wore the dazed, uncomprehending look of someone not quite sure of what hit him. Judah swooped in again with startling suddenness, this time penetrating Sample's defense with a looping left to the head that floored his rival again.

Sample was up quickly, but was soon being knocked all around the ring by Judah's buzzsaw attack. Sample's gloves touched the canvas at one point, but he was knocked into the ropes before Fitzgerald could start counting. Judah rushed in again, feinted, and then unleashed a blink-of-an-eye right-left, and Sample sank into a sitting position in a corner.

As Judah began to back off, a groggy Sample tried to pull himself up by hooking his arm around the rope. But before he was halfway up, Judah belted him again with another left. It was obviously a late shot, but the final flurry had come so quickly, the slow-moving Fitzgerald had failed to come between them in time. Even so, the ref was willing to let Sample continue, but when the stricken fighter staggered, Fitzgerald waved it off.

"We handled it quick, Brooklyn style," said Judah, who, despite his marvelous talents, was lucky not to have been disqualified.

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: Main Events
(7-9-99)
Jay Miller ■

Ref Ed Fitzgerald raises Judah's hand after his quick kayo of Sample

Photo by Angle Carlino

Ike Ibeabuchi

(Continued from page 37)

Ezra Sellers in Phoenix on February 18 of this year during the training for the Byrd fight. After a punch from Sellers opened a cut over Ibeabuchi's eyelid, the sparring session was stopped. When Sellers later walked by Ibeabuchi with his wedding ring on, Sellers claims Ibeabuchi became incensed, thinking he had been wearing the ring when he cut him. Ibeabuchi allegedly attacked Sellers and trainer Jay Wilson, who had wrapped Sellers' hands, and Sellers ended up needing to have reconstructive surgery on the anterior cruciate ligament of his right knee. Bill Fitzgerald of the Phoenix District Attorney's office said in July that the incident was being investigated by Phoenix police as a possible felony aggravated assault.

Though far less significant than his legal problems, Ibeabuchi has also been involved in several minor incidents over the past year or so that illustrate further how difficult and unpredictable he is:

•The day before his comeback fight against Ray in Marksville, Louisiana, Ibeabuchi refused to go to the weigh-in, telling trainer Chuck McGregor (who was substituting for the absent Cokes) that he didn't have to weigh in because "they know who I am." Knowing that Ibeabuchi wouldn't be allowed to fight if he didn't weigh in, a desperate McGregor hatched a plan. He called Ibeabuchi's room from the hotel lobby, disguised his voice, and asked to speak to "The President." Ibeabuchi, who is very fond of his nickname, listened attentively as McGregor told him he had information for him that was too dangerous to discuss over the phone. McGregor asked Ibeabuchi to meet him in the lobby in five minutes, but instead of coming as "The President," to disguise himself as Ike Ibeabuchi, the boxer. Once Ibeabuchi was lured to the weigh-in area, he was convinced to step on the scale.

•While Ibeabuchi was in New York City in late-June with Juckett in the days leading up to the Grant-Lou Savarese fight at Madison Square Garden, Ibeabuchi, who was reportedly given $3,000 spending money by Kushner, ran into a problem at a Manhattan boutique.

"I was basically his chaperone for a few days," said Juckett in describing the incident. "He was in the store for about 20 minutes, and he had gathered up about $500-$600 worth of stuff he wanted. They were boxing the stuff up for him, and then when they told him the price, there was silence. It got very uncomfortable. Ike made a few cell calls. Then he asked me for my credit card, and I said I didn't have one. There was more silence. And then Ike just finally walked out without buying anything, even though he had plenty of money."

•When it was time to fly from Phoenix to Seattle for the Byrd fight, Ibeabuchi had another airport incident.

"Ike wouldn't get on the plane because he said there were demons on it!" said Cokes, who had walked out on Ibeabuchi in frustration during training camp for the Byrd fight, only to be coaxed back by The President. "Some of us took that plane, and Ike finally got on a later one that, I guess, didn't have demons on it.

"People don't realize how hard it is to get him in the ring. They just see the finished product. After the Byrd fight, Cedric and I immediately just hugged each other. We were so relieved that he had done it."

What Ibeabuchi, 20-0 (15), had done in the Byrd fight was reign in and knock out the best defensive fighter in the heavyweight division, needing only five rounds to re-establish himself as arguably the best of the young heavyweights. A vicious left uppercut from the quick-fisted Nigerian did the damage, and Ibeabuchi was poised for big-money fights with other top contenders. But before the hotel room incident in Vegas put his career in jeopardy, Ibeabuchi put it on hold himself by turning down $700,000 to bowl over Jeremy Williams as a co-feature to Grant-Savarese, then refusing $1-million for a proposed mega-showdown with Grant in November on HBO.

"It would be the most significant young heavyweight fight we've ever done," DiBella said in July, while the negotiations were underway. "The problem with Ike is that he thinks he should be fighting for a world title because he beat Tua and Byrd. But he doesn't understand how this business works, and he's finding it frustrating."

Another person who was frustrated was Kushner, who believes that with an impressive win over Williams, Ibeabuchi would have been able to command the $1.5-million he wanted to fight Grant. All told, that's $2.2-million that Ibeabuchi passed on, and whether the opportunity will ever come again is anyone's guess.

"As Ike's friend and promoter, I'm angry and I'm disappointed with the young man," Kushner said just hours before getting the bad news about Ibeabuchi's arrest in Las Vegas. "I feel not taking the Williams fight was a golden opportunity missed. Still, in a fight with Grant, there's no doubt the winner becomes the heavyweight heir apparent."

For now, it's up to likes of Grant and Tua to decide who deserves that title. For Ibeabuchi, boxing should not even be a concern. Even if he escapes a lengthy jail sentence, the incredibly talented, incredibly troubled young heavyweight has to find some way to overcome his emotional problems before he goes on with his boxing career. For Tony Ayala Jr., it took 16 years behind bars for him to be considered rehabilitated. Nobody knows what it will take for Ibeabuchi, but Cokes hasn't given up hope that it can happen.

"He's been arrested a few times," Cokes said, "but he never has had to stay in jail real long. And maybe that's what he needs. I think that's what's going to happen this time." ■

David Tua

(Continued from page 39)

with fringe contender David Izon (KO 12) and the ordinary likes of Oleg Maskaev (KO 11) and Jeff Wooden (W 10). For Team Tua, the blastout of Bell was a little more satisfying.

"He was fantastic," trainer Ronnie Shields said of Tua's performance. "He did what he was supposed to do. He jumped on the guy and didn't give him any breathing room. That's the way he's supposed to fight all his fights. From now on, that's what you're going to see."

Shields also sees the positive side to

Tua's recent struggles to end matters early: an ability to score late-round knockouts, something that even Tyson wasn't adept at in his prime.

"David gets stronger as the fight goes on," Shields said. "That's going to pose a lot of problems for a lot of people. He knocks out guys in the 11th and 12th round. How many guys can do that? Of course, he's a slow starter, but it's all in his mind. Sometimes David gets in the mind frame that he wants to go so many rounds and he has to prove to himself that he's the best fighter in the world. I'd just rather he do it early. There's not anybody who can go the distance with him now."

So where does this leave Tua in his quest to fulfill his lifelong dream? It depends on those three blind mice—the WBA, WBC, and IBF.

"These organizations are the scourge of boxing," said DiBella. "If there's a unified champion, I guarantee you'll the see the shenanigans all over again. David could be looking at more than a year down the line."

What HBO would like to do is keep Tua active against the best in the division without regard to the rankings. Should he lose, however, Tua probably would lose his mandatory status, so there is a risk involved if he elects to continue proving himself against top competition.

In terms of accomplishment, Tua stands with or above the best of them. Grant, though 6'7" and 255 pounds, hasn't shown the one-punch knockout power or fire. Ibeabuchi has shown both, but he often acts as if he belongs in a cell with padded walls. His latest and perhaps most serious incident occurred in Las Vegas a few days after the Tua-Bell fight, when he was arrested on charges he sexually assaulted a woman in his hotel suite. Besides, there are many people who believe Tua deserved the nod over "The President" in their give-and-take brawl.

"Nobody should challenge for the title outside of David," said Shields. "Ike Ibeabuchi, come on man, he didn't beat David Tua. That was bulls_ _ _. That was a bogus decision. It was a good, close fight, but you've got to beat the champion [Tua held the WBC International belt at the time].

"Ike beat Chris Byrd. Come on, he's an awkward fighter, but Ike Ibeabuchi had the right style for Byrd. Michael Grant, look at him against Lou Savarese. He couldn't go three or four rounds with David Tua. Every fight, David has proven himself. Everybody's going to duck him."

That probably won't be the case with Rahman, who should be easy to find. He has been clamoring for a rematch since his disputed loss, but it would be one of those dangerous encounters that few men with number-one rankings at stake would elect to take. And that IBF ranking is Tua's ticket to a crack at the ultimate prize. Tua, who probably has the best chin in the division, doesn't lack confidence when assessing how he matches up with the two kings.

On Holyfield: "I'd knock him out."

What about 6'5" Lewis? "I'd knock him out, too."

"Lewis would sign to fight David before Holyfield would," Shields said. "Holyfield sparred with David when he was getting ready for Tyson the first time. Lewis, he thinks David is going to lie back and he's going to win all these rounds. If David jumps right on top of him, it would pose a lot of problems for Lennox Lewis.

"Look at all the guys David Tua has fought and all the guys Lennox Lewis has fought. How many names can you really and truly call a champion?"

Tua could definitely be competitive with the likes of Lewis, but he will probably have to develop a more complete arsenal if he's to be expected to win. Using the right hand more is a start, and the results appear to be just as devastating when he finds the target.

"Everybody looks for David Tua's left hook," Shields said. "David threw so many right hands against Bell, nobody expected it. All we did was add the right hand to it. And he was leading off with the right hand. This guy is strong all the way around. Look at this guy's legs. That's where all the power is."

Tua has so much of it that Roy Jones—who has been mentioned as a possible opponent—was at a loss for words for a change. Even after the fight, Jones, who serves as an analyst for HBO, didn't have the gumption to call for Tua after such a powerpunching display.

"Hey, let's do it, Jones. If he feels he can, don't say it, bring it. That would be a quick fight. You might run and look good all night, but once a shot lands, it's over," said Tua, who later tried to temper his emotions. "I take nothing away from the guy. He's done a lot for boxing, but this is the heavyweights."

Added Shields: "Once David puts his mind to it, he can knock out anybody in five rounds. I love Roy Jones. I think he's the best fighter in the world. But Roy Jones is not a heavyweight. He's too small. You will not see him challenge David Tua."

Tua will have to stay busy and hope his big shot comes before he needs a cane. Not long after the Bell fight, he returned to training camp in Vero Beach, Florida, to await his next mission. It's a place where a lot of young fighters don't like to train because it's a retirement community, but it suits this 26-year-old.

"My concept of training camp is everything has to be quiet," Tua said, rejecting the rite of wine, women, and song. "Nothing but focus. The beach is outside of my door, and I love that. That's good stuff. That's soul stuff right there, brother."

Doesn't sound like a fighter with fire in the belly, and even after an emphatic victory like the one over Bell, Tua approaches his successes with a measured enthusiasm. He expects to win, and he only can thank his lucky stars that he's streaking again. In more ways than one.

"I'll tell you, after a win like this, I just run around the place naked," said Tua, then pausing to catch his breath from laughing. "No, I'm just kidding.

"But seriously, the hardest decision was to leave the people I love so much to come to the States. After a fight a lot of the guys say, 'Come on, go hang out and go to the bar.' But after a fight, I come to the room, say my prayers, call my mother, call room service for a couple burgers and fries, watch some TV, and go asleep. That's it. That's all I do. There's nothing to celebrate for. I haven't accomplished and fulfilled my dream. I'm here on business. Just another day at the office." ■

Johnnie Whitehead is an assistant sports editor of the Orlando Sentinel and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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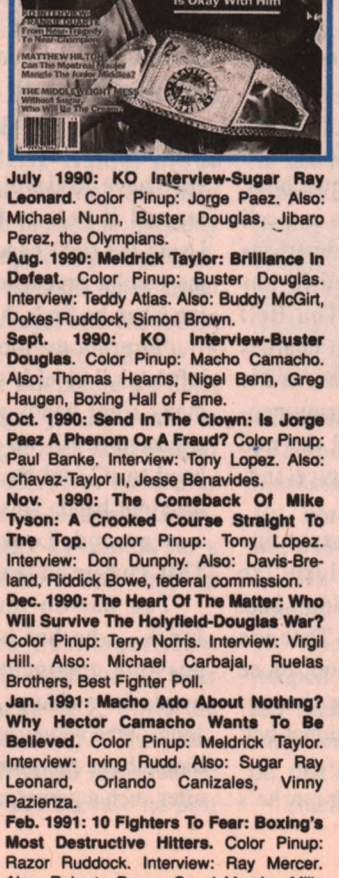

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David Reid

(Continued from page 42)

played ring smarts, conditioning, and an awkward, defensive style that had Reid missing most of his big punches.

Prior to the fight, Mitchell had described Kelly as a "good, average fighter," and predicted that "it should be a good fight for six or seven rounds. But once David figures him out, it'll be lights out." Well, Reid never did quite figure Kelly out, and although all three judges scored the fight in favor of the defending champion, the challenger's stock went up in defeat, and Reid's went down.

During the postfight post-mortem, somebody asked Reid what Fernando Vargas probably thought of his performance.

"He's probably thinking, *I'm gonna kill this guy*," admitted Reid.

"No, Fernando was probably thinking he was glad *he* wasn't fighting Kelly," retorted Mitchell.

In a way, they're both right.

How serious of a handicap is Reid's droopy left eyelid?

Very serious and getting more so as the quality of opposition increases.

"There's two things you must have in this game: legs and headlights," said IBF middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins, who attended the Reid-Kelly fight at Atlantic City's Boardwalk Convention Hall ballroom. "You have to see what's coming, and David Reid has problems seeing. I think that everybody he fights between now and the time he retires will go for a target that's so, so obvious."

Not only is there a constant danger that an adversary will pound Reid's damaged eye completely shut and force a stoppage, it is becoming increasingly apparent that what Reid does and does not do in the ring is, to a certain extent, governed by the limited vision in his left eye. He constantly tilts his head in strange positions and maneuvers himself so he can train his good eye on his antagonist.

Like all boxers, Reid has to undergo a prefight physical before every contest. Therefore, his vision, despite the droopy eyelid, apparently measures up to the boxing commission's medical standards. The strange thing is that Reid's eye looks practically normal when he's not in the ring, but as soon as he ducks between the ropes, it starts to sag, sometimes even before he gets hit. Mitchell's theory is that the intense heat from the TV lights causes the muscle to relax and the lid to lower, and while he might be right, it makes little difference why it happens. The bottom line is that it is a formidable impairment that Reid will have to endure, and, sadly, one that could end his career prematurely.

Has Reid, who won the title in only his 12th pro fight, been pushed too fast for his own good?

No, and although Mitchell and other members of Team Reid are quick to point to his limited pro experience when rationalizing his mistakes, the truth of the matter is that Reid has been brought along at exactly the right pace. Whether purists like it or not, boxing is not the way it use to be back in the days when a fighter needed 50 or 60 fights before challenging for the title. Today, top prospects, especially those with Olympic credentials, are groomed to reach the top as fast as possible in order to maximize their earning potential. And when you have a valuable but damaged fighter like Reid, the urgency is even greater.

You also have to take into consideration Mitchell's frequently stated belief that a fighter doesn't learn anything by bowling over a series of tomato cans, and that the only way to prepare a young fighter to fight the best is to put him in tough from the get-go. And, by and large, that's the way Reid has been matched. It's highly unlikely that he would have been able to take the WBA belt away from such an experienced and skilled champion as Laurent Boudouani if he hadn't tangled with opponents such as Sam Calderon (10-0), Robert Frazier (15-1), Simon Brown (47-7), and James Coker (19-0) on his way to the title bout.

Why hasn't Reid, with just seven quick wins in 13 pro bouts, knocked out more of his opponents?

Reid's come-from-behind, one-punch TKO of Cuban Alfredo Duvergel to win Olympic gold was somewhat deceptive, and people jumped to the wrong conclusion. Yes, Reid's right hand is probably the most dangerous single punch in the 154-pound division, but he is not a slugger, the sort of fighter who depends on punching power and raw aggression to overpower his opponents. Rather, Reid is a boxer-puncher who fights best by utilizing his speed, boxing skills, and adaptability. The punch is always there, a threat opponents have to be wary of, but not the main focus of his game.

The quality of opposition also has something to do with Reid's low kayo percentage. Going into the Kelly fight, his 12 previous opponents had a combined record of 310-45-5 (212), which isn't the kind of stat you normally associate with the fodder most prospects' glossy records are built upon. His last three adversaries—Coker, Boudouani, and Kelly—were all clever defensive boxers. Coker and Kelly have never been stopped, and the Frenchman's two inside-the-distance losses came back in 1993.

The droopy eyelid also plays a role here, as Reid seems reluctant to take too many risks, most likely because of the peril he would be placing himself in with brash attacks. The inability to see properly may also have something to do with the fact that Reid misses so many punches despite having excellent coordination and hand speed.

Why isn't Reid following Mitchell's instructions?

Ask 100 fighters about their failure to stick with a fight plan, and 99 of them will tell you that what seems easy from outside the ring is frequently an entirely different story when you're on the other side of the ropes—and your opponent is trying to knock your head off. But that aside, there might be more to it in Reid's case.

You have to remember that Reid and Mitchell have been together since the fighter was approximately 10 years old, and have a relationship that goes beyond boxing. Like all young men, particularly highly successful young men, Reid sometimes thinks he knows better than the man who has been his mentor for the past 15 years. Even Mitchell has to frequently remind himself that the 25-year-old Reid is not a boy anymore.

"Sometimes I look at him, and he's still a kid to me," said Mitchell before the Kelly fight. "But he has grown up. He's

young man now. He's a world champion."

This is not to suggest that there is a rift brewing between the pair. During a press conference to announce the Kelly fight, Reid presented Mitchell with his championship belt as a Father's Day present. There's genuine love and respect between them, but as anyone who has ever raised children knows, that doesn't mean that everything always runs smoothly.

Will everything fall into place for Reid with just a little more experience, as Mitchell repeatedly assures?

Maybe, but the head coach of the United States' '96 Olympic boxing team been saying the same thing for some time now, and you can't help but wonder when, if ever, that day will arrive. And if Reid's performances don't improve in the near future, you can be sure there will be talk to the effect that Mitchell, who has never trained a world champion before, has taken the fighter as far as he can. But as anyone close to the situation will tell you, Reid's best bet is to stick with the guy who got him this far. The unique bond between them was partly responsible for Reid's miraculous Olympic triumph, and if he's to duplicate that sort of success as a pro, he'll need Mitchell by his side.

Does the fact that Reid has been knocked down three times by relatively light punchers—twice by Coker and once by Kelly—signify he has a weak chin?

While The American Dream's chin isn't exactly granite, it's not made of crystal either. All three knockdowns were as much a result of Reid being off-balance or not being focused as they were a consequence of the blows themselves. In the fifth round of the Kelly fight, Reid was too busy glancing over to his corner to see Kelly's looping left hook rushing to meet the side of his face.

"I was kind of playing in the ring," said Reid when asked about his trip to the canvas. "Al was telling me some things to do, and I was, like, 'Okay, Al.' I turned around, and Kevin Kelly hit me with a punch."

Although Reid did not appear hurt by any of the blows that have floored him, any knockdown, regardless of its severity, usually costs a fighter two points on the scorecards. That's something no fighter can afford to do on a regular basis, especially when he leaves so many of his bouts in the hands of the judges.

Why isn't Reid attracting large crowds to his fights, even when they are held in his hometown of Philadelphia or in nearby Atlantic City?

Part of the reason is that relatively few African-American fighters outside of the heavyweight division are big at the box office right now. Even Roy Jones doesn't fill up many seats outside of the Mississippi Gulf region. But that's only one component of the equation. The fact that Reid has only fought once in his hometown as a pro means that he never developed his most natural constituency, and you also have to take into consideration that he doesn't have the in-your-face style that made sluggers like Joe Frazier, Matthew Saad Muhammad, Bennie Briscoe, and Frank "The Animal" Fletcher so enormously popular among fight fans in the City of Brotherly Love.

The same can be said on a national level. True, most of Reid's fights have featured skillful boxing and an element of suspense, but they've lacked the thrilling action or one-sided dominance that attracts fans in large numbers.

Against Kelly, Reid drew 1,967 people to a venue that holds 2,500, but attendance was probably hurt by the negative publicity surrounding HBO's refusal to televise the fight.

"To be perfectly honest, Kelly's not much of a fighter," said HBO Sports Senior Vice President Lou DiBella before the fight. "He's not horrendous, but he won't be competitive against David Reid."

While just how good Kelly is remains a matter of opinion, in hindsight, few would dispute the fact that the fight was competitive—or that Reid has yet to catch on big-time with boxing fans despite his Olympic heroics and engaging personality.

What's next for Reid?

At press time, Reid was scheduled to defend against former WBC super welter champ Keith Mullings on August 28. Barring anything unforeseen, that fight will have happened by the time you read this, and if Reid is victorious, HBO plans to feature him on a twin bill with Vargas. Providing both are still champions at that point, the next step would probably be a showdown between the two young titlists.

Is it a given, in light of Vargas' sparkling showing against Raul Marquez and Reid's so-so performance against Kelly, that Reid will lose if and when he faces Vargas in a 154-pound unification bout?

Not necessarily. To get to that point, Reid, like Vargas, will have to tally at least two more successful title defenses. By then, maybe he will have finally settled into the groove Mitchell has long predicted was only a few fights away.

Also, when comparing Reid and Vargas' recent performances, it's only fair to look at the respective styles of the competition. Vargas won the title against Yory Boy Campas, a straight-ahead brawler who led with his face. Raul Marquez, against whom Vargas delivered perhaps his best performance to date, is also a relatively easy target with only marginal defensive ability. Both are proven bleeders. Conversely, Boudouani and Kelly were far more skilled defensively and nowhere near as cut-prone. And while the Frenchman and the Aussie fought with finesse and tenacity, neither took any unnecessary risks, choosing instead to fight with more prudence than passion.

Providing there are no disasters along the way, observers will continue to compare Reid and Vargas right up until the bell rings for their much-anticipated showdown. And what happens after that should answer all the unresolved questions about both of them. ■

New Faces

(Continued from page 18)

internal debate as to whether he should continue to box or just pursue his education and get out of the sport he first fell in love with when he was five years old.

"I just broke down afterward," Pires recalled. "I was always very close to my dad. I thought about quitting boxing. I didn't want to box anymore. I took about a week off, sat there by myself, and thought

(Continued on page 62)

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New Faces

(Continued from page 61)

about it. So many people told me boxing is what my father wanted me to do. I wanted to make the Olympic team for me, but more so for my father. I knew the condition he was in; I thought he was going to hold on a little longer. Every time I fight in the ring, I feel he's in my corner. I always knew he loved me, and that's all I have to know right there."

Pires lost in the first round of the Olympic Trials, but he does not regret his decision to stay with the Sweet Science, even though he has plenty of other options. He's just two classes away from earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice at UMass-Dartmouth. Pires knows when he enters the ring that losing doesn't mean he'll starve. Right now, he works as a residential counselor at a group home for troubled teens.

This time is the payback for the hectic period Pires has endured. He had to split his life between school and boxing. A typical day for Pires meant getting up at 5 a.m. every weekday to run, attending a class at 8 a.m., followed by another at 10. He would finish up at around 1 p.m., come home and do homework, and between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., train. Then he would come back home and hit the books again, covering anything he might have missed right after school. He had no social life. It was a life of books and boxing—each tugging at him from opposite directions.

"I'm happy everything is winding down now; I'm getting kind of burned out," Pires admitted. "The schedule affected me in the ring somewhat. I know I had to put more into my training. There was a time where I had a paper to do, I would take a day off from the gym. I was always juggling the two.

"There were times when I had to travel across the country for a fight, and there I was in a hotel writing reports or papers, or I would be reading and getting ready for finals. That's one thing boxing really helped me out with, it helped me with my focus as far as school and as far as life in general."

Pires' introduction to the sport came through his father. Allan Pires Sr. was an amateur boxer who won a few local Golden Gloves events, and he got his sons, Allan Jr. and Jason, involved in the sport at a young age. Allan Jr., who is three years older than Jason, won a local Junior Olympic title, but got out of boxing soon after that. Jason says his brother discovered that boxing required more discipline than he imagined. Allan Jr. wasn't willing to put the extra effort into it, but Jason was hooked.

The tall, skinny Pires was good from the start, and he was encouraged by his father and the older fighters in the gym. They would tell him he was going to become something great someday. But between the ages of 10 and 15, Pires switched his focus to other sports. Soccer, wrestling, and basketball began to fill his afternoons, instead of what he perceived as the daily drudgery of pounding the bag and running countless miles by himself.

Pires grew up in the famous boxing town of Brockton, the home of Rocky Marciano and Marvelous Marvin Hagler. When he was 16, he moved in with his father, who was divorced from Jason's mother, in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he presently lives today.

"It was by choice," Pires said. "When I moved in with my dad, he introduced me to Bucky Vincent. Since then, I've put all my focus into boxing. I knew I was pretty good, and I knew I had the work ethic to progress in my sport. I started winning these local tournaments around my area, and I started progressing to national tournaments. It all just came from working hard and dedicating myself to the sport."

Pires is a right-handed boxer/puncher who is able to adjust his style. He has knockout power (his best punch is his left hook), but his 72" reach and steady jab are his hallmarks. His considerable height sets him apart from other junior featherweights. As of press time, Pires was ranked number seven by the IBF at 122 pounds.

The nearest Pires has come to losing came against Arturo Estrada in St. Louis, Missouri, on January 29. When Pires fell through the ropes in the 10th round and could not get back into the ring by the

unt of 20, Estrada was originally declared the winner by disqualification. But a review of the videotape showed that Pires had been accidentally pushed from the ring, placing the decision in the hands of the judges, who all had Pires ahead.

"Jason's a pretty good fighter," said boxing commentator Bob Sheridan, who saw Pires fight against Estrada in St. Louis. "This kid is unique in that he's not the stereotypical fighter like you meet today. He's going to college and is very well-spoken. He looked good in the early going against Estrada. He was going to take him out, but I think, because of his outside schedule, we didn't see the best of Jason. His conditioning was lacking.

"Jason was winning the fight, he just went through the ropes and landed in a real awkward position. He's a real exciting action fighter. He's a terrific athlete. He may have a generous world ranking, but he has world-class ability. When he finishes up in college and focuses on being a full-time fighter, he has the ability to be a world champion. I think Jason has the heart and dedication."

Pires still hears the voice, and still feels the eyes staring down on him as he puts one boot on, then the other. Pires will peek out at the snow that blankets the ground around his home, and know it does not automatically give him a day off from running. That's not what his father wanted. ■

Roy Jones

(Continued from page 29)

Bontempo: "This is an intriguing fight. I see Jones fighting a physical battle early, then backing off and boxing. But when Johnson wants to be, he is one of the most stylish boxers around, and Jones could have trouble getting to him. While I can envision Jones winning, I pick Johnson to outpoint him in a very competitive fight." **Pick: Johnson**

Score: Johnson, 3-0 ■

Robert Mladinich, a freelance writer based in New York City, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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Carmen Basilio

(Continued from page 33)

today," he said. "People have it a lot easier. The guys in the ring today couldn't compare, wouldn't stand a chance. The social circumstances are incomparable. People now can go out and get an education, and that's good. But that wasn't the case for everyone when I was fighting. People grew up in poverty, in an environment of no work, no prospects, and little hope. That lent itself to strong character, good fighters. You had to be to survive. There's no depression today, no lingering effects of one. There's not the same reason to be hard."

Hard as nails in the ring, Basilio has always been a playful soul outside it. Every glove he signed in Canastota under blue skies in June was mischievously jabbed toward the face of its owner before he handed it back.

"There are some very serious people around, though," he reflected. "Someone wrote me a nasty letter after I played that game up in Massachusetts. Suffice to say that I never wrote back to the gentleman concerned. I've always enjoyed a bit of fun. I like fishing, too, and hunting. I used to hunt rabbit, deer; still do. Not so much though. I don't have the patience anymore. You don't get as excited about things once you're older."

The Hall of Fame can always be relied upon to quicken the pulse.

"It's something I love. It's my hometown and it's put the town on the map," he said. "Credit to all those people, Ed Brophy and his staff. I made some appearances and did some speaking to help when it was merely an idea, but they did all the hard work and they deserve all the praise. For me, it's great to go back to see my friends. We talk over old times, and it's a great feeling. And I have an edge over every other fighter there: I know everybody. They don't."

They know enough that to dispute this and risk getting the wrong side of Carmen might do their reputations no good at all. Ask Felix Trinidad. ■

Brian Doogan, THE RING'S European correspondent, made his first visit to the International Boxing Hall of Fame during the 1999 induction weekend.

Johnny Summerlin

(Continued from page 47)

"He probably would've been counted out if I hadn't stood over him. But I was just so glad to knock him down."

Although he eventually became ranked as high as fourth in the world, Summerlin never got within sniffing distance of a fight with champion Rocky Marciano, a situation in which other worthy ranked heavyweights of that era such as Nino Valdes and Clarence Henry also found themselves.

"When Marciano got the title, he fought older guys and kept the title for himself and didn't fight the contenders," said Summerlin. "We had to fight among ourselves and beat each other up."

Thus, he decisioned Harold Carter in Detroit, and then Carter reversed the verdict in a rematch at Madison Square Garden. Sandwiched between those 1956 bouts was a memorable one with the man Summerlin calls "the toughest puncher I was ever in with."

In their June 20 fight in Chicago, Bob Satterfield "had me out and didn't know it," Summerlin recalled.

Punched out of the ring in the second round, Summerlin said, "all I remember is people at ringside saying, 'You got to get back in, but we cannot help you.' The next thing I remember, my trainer was shaking me in the corner and asking me what round it was. I said it was the third. It was the eighth.

"I never been hit like that before," said Summerlin, who rallied in the last two rounds, but lost the decision. "I could've been killed. Satterfield was that kind of puncher."

Eddie Machen roared out of California in '55, knocking out 10 of his first 11 opponents. The next year, Machen dumped contenders Valdes and John Holman, and was 18-0 (14) when he faced Summerlin in Syracuse, New York, in December '56. The judges all voted for Machen, whose subsequent mental problems would keep the Californian from realizing the potential Summerlin saw first-hand.

"He was a smooth boxer who could also punch, and just didn't make no mistakes in there," Summerlin said. "He was like a perfect boxer. You couldn't get no hard punches off on him."

In 1957, Summerlin got no punches o against anybody. Manager Loftus, who ran numbers operation, went to jail.

"He had a contract on me that I didn know he had," Summerlin asserted. couldn't work or make money unless he g half of it. A lawyer told me, 'If you we going to sell a pop bottle, he would get som of it.'"

So for a whole year, Summerlin sat idl until a friend, C.W. Smith, got the Loft contract voided in court. The comeback g rolling in early-'58 with four straight win and on May 24, Valdes came to Detroit Before their fight, Summerlin noticed a tin gling, numb sensation on his left side.

"I knew something was wrong," he said.

That was confirmed after Valdes knocke him down in the fifth round. Unhur Summerlin got up on his right knee and lis tened to the count. Then he shifted his weigh onto his left knee and arm as he started t rise, and, because of the numbness on th side, tumbled over. He managed to regain hi feet, but the fight was stopped.

"I never fought again," said Summerlin who finished 34-8-2 (21). "I had fought most of the tough fighters. I was satisfied with quitting."

Summerlin never did find out exactly what was wrong with him, but when a doctor advised him to give up boxing, he did. And he wouldn't end up one of those old-timers punching the bag in their street clothes. Benefactor Smith got him employment with Steller Engineering Company, where, over 40 years later, Summerlin still works part-time.

"I'm just living happily ever after, I guess you could say," he said.

Although diabetes struck a couple of years ago, and he still feels that left-side tingling, Summerlin keeps within 10 pounds of his fighting weight by walking and jogging daily. He figures he has one more fight in him, and knows just who he wants in the other corner.

"Wherever we go when we leave here, I'm gonna go where he is, and we're gonna fight again," he said, laughingly referring to Young Jack Johnson, who was fatally stabbed by a step-daughter in '59. And if Summerlin requires a tuneup in the meantime, the man who would have been voted the most unlikely to succeed with his fists can always go to his next high school reunion. ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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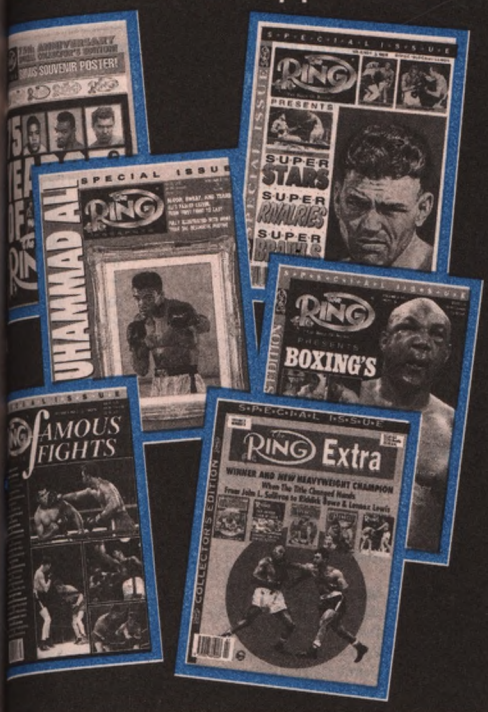

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of June 1999, the WBC as of July 1999, and the IBF as of July 1999.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	C	C
John Ruiz (USA)	1	2	3
David Tua (NZ)	2	–	1
Michael Grant (USA)	3	6	–
Larry Donald (USA)	4	3	4
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	5	11	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	6	–	11
Shannon Briggs (USA)	7	–	–
Hasim Rahman (USA)	8	–	5
Ross Puritty (USA)	9	–	–
Henry Akinwande (GB)	10	1	6
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	4	8
Oleg Maskaev (UKR)	28	5	–
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	11	7	–
Jade Scott (USA)	18	8	–
Derrick Jefferson (USA)	29	9	–
Dick Ryan (USA)	–	10	–
Ike Ibeabuchi (NIG)	–	–	2
Chris Byrd (USA)	22	–	7
Danell Nicholson (USA)	–	–	9
Monte Barrett (USA)	14	–	10

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	–	–	C
Dale Brown (CAN)	1	5	3
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	2	–	–
Saul Montana (MEX)	3	1	1
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	4	9	–
Andre Purlette (GUY)	5	–	6
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	6	–	–
Terry Dunstan (GB)	7	–	9
Alex Gonzalez (PR)	8	–	–
Samuel Florimond (FRA)	9	–	11
Virgil Hill (USA)	10	2	–
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	–	3	–
Akim Tafer (FRA)	–	4	–
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	–	6	–
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	15	7	5
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	–	8	–
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	10	–
Alex Gonzales (USA)	–	–	2
Torsten May (GER)	16	–	4
Arthur Williams (USA)	14	–	7
Napoleon Tagoe (USA)	12	–	8
Stefan Anghem (SWI)	–	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	C
Michael Nunn (USA)	1	9	–
Montell Griffin (USA)	2	–	7
Clinton Woods (GB)	3	10	–
Hisashi Teraji (JAP)	4	–	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	5	–	3
Eric Harding (USA)	6	4	10
Reggie Johnson (USA)	7	–	6
Lou Del Valle (USA)	8	3	8
Yawe Davis (ITA)	9	–	–
Antonio Tarver (USA)	10	–	1
Richard Hall (USA)	–	1	–
David Telesco (USA)	–	2	9
Derrick Harmon (USA)	15	5	–
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	14	6	4
Timo Masua (NZ)	–	7	–
Rogerio Lobo (BRA)	–	8	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	–	–	5

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Richie Woodhall (GB)	C	–	–
Byron Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	C
Glenn Catley (GB)	1	–	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	2	4	11
Bruno Girard (FRA)	3	1	3
David Starie (GB)	4	5	6
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	5	11	4
Dean Francis (GB)	6	–	12
Mario Velt (GER)	7	8	8
Frank Liles (USA)	8	2	–
Vinny Pazienza (USA)	9	–	–
Omar Sheika (USA)	10	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	–	3	1
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	6	–
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	7	–
Frederic Alvarez (FRA)	–	9	–
Craig Cummings (USA)	–	10	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	2
Glenn Johnson (USA)	20	–	5
Bryant Brannon (USA)	–	–	7
Tocker Pudwill (USA)	–	–	9
Sam Leuii (AUSTRL)	–	–	10

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Holmes (USA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	–	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Robert McCracken (GB)	1	5	3
Antwun Echols (USA)	2	–	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	3	–	8
Kevin Palmer (USA)	4	–	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	5	4	6
Davey Hilton (CAN)	6	11	4
Erland Betare (FRA)	7	–	–
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	8	–	–
Howard Eastman (GB)	9	6	12
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	10	10	–
Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX)	–	1	10
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	2	–
Winky Wright (USA)	–	3	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	7	–
Ramon Moyano (ARG)	20	8	–
Sikat Pasarib (IND)	–	9	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Brian Barbosa (USA)	13	–	5
Robert Allen (USA)	15	–	7
Andrew Council (USA)	18	–	9

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	C	–	–
David Reid (USA)	–	C	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	–	C
Tony Marshall (USA)	1	–	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	2	2	–
Keith Mullings (USA)	3	–	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	4	4	12
Roman Karmâzin (RUS)	5	9	10
Anthony Jones (USA)	6	10	–
Rodney Jones (USA)	7	6	11
Tony Badea (ROM)	8	–	–
Quirino Garcia (MEX)	9	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	10	1	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	–	3	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	–	5	–
Javier Castillo (PAN)	–	7	–
Raul Frank (GUY)	–	8	–
Winky Wright (USA)	15	–	1
Ross Thompson (USA)	–	–	2
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	28	–	3
Bronco McKart (USA)	20	–	4
Yory Boy Campas (MEX)	16	–	5
Carl Daniels (USA)	12	12	6
Emmett Linton (USA)	–	11	7
Marshall Simpson (GUY)	–	–	8
Raul Marquez (USA)	–	–	9

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
James Page (USA)	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Derrell Coley (USA)	1	–	6
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	2	4	12
Ike Quartey (GHA)	3	7	3
Vernon Forrest (USA)	4	6	2
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	5	10	–
Hector Camacho Jr (USA)	6	–	–
Oba Carr (USA)	7	8	5
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	8	–	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	9	–	–
Alessandro Duran (ITA)	10	–	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	24	2	–
Michael Trabant (GERE)	28	3	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	–	5	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	11	9	–
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	1
Michael Covington (USA)	–	–	4
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	7
Sean Sullivan (AUSTRL)	–	–	8
Leonard Townsend (USA)	–	–	9
Sam Garr (USA)	16	–	10

L WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	1	–
Jermaine Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Vernon Millett (USA)	–	–	C
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	1	–	–
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	2	9	–
Rolando Hurtado (CUB)	3	–	–
Koay Urkal (TUR)	4	–	7
Jungkil Kim (KOR)	5	–	–
Terrence Cauthen (USA)	6	–	–
Vince Phillips (USA)	7	–	8
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	8	–	–
Ahmed Santos (USA)	9	–	–
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	10	6	–
Fred Pendleton (USA)	–	2	12
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	3	–
Yuichi Ono (JAP)	–	4	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	5	4
Reggie Green (USA)	13	7	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	8	6
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	10	–
Lin Judah (USA)	–	–	1
Shane Mosley (USA)	–	–	2
Ike Bergman (SA)	–	–	3
Oscar Leiva (ARG)	19	–	5
Hector Lopez (USA)	–	–	9
Allan Vester (DEN)	17	–	10
LIGHTWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Steve Johnston (USA)	C	–	–
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Billy Schwer (GB)	1	5	4
Oscar Bazan (MEX)	2	–	–
Somsai Sithkodam (THAI)	3	–	–
Jung Soo Choi (KOR)	4	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	5	–	–
Julio Rios (ARG)	6	–	–
Mick Yoshimura (JAP)	7	4	–
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	8	–	–
Daniel Lifa (FRA)	9	7	–
Jung Kwon Baek (KOR)	10	–	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	1	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	12	2	–
Israel Cardona (USA)	–	3	1
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	11	6	–
Golden Johnson (USA)	17	8	–
Bill Martinez (USA)	–	9	–
Oscar Garcia Cano (SPA)	–	10	–
Billy Irwin (CAN)	22	–	2
Paul Spadafora (USA)	–	–	3
Renato Cornett (AUS)	–	–	5
George Scott (SWE)	–	–	6
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	–	7
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	–	–	8
Lawrence Ndou (SA)	–	–	9
Neptune Smith (GB)	–	–	10
JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	C	–	–
Sakra Sim (MON)	–	C	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	–	C
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	–	11
Hugo Vargas (MEX)	2	–	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	3	–	2
Lawrence Ndou (SA)	4	–	–
Kimmongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	5	–	–
Shingo Nagashima (JAP)	6	10	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	7	6	3
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	8	4	10
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	9	–	–
Angel Manfredy (USA)	10	–	–
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	–	1	4
Jung Soo Choi (KOR)	–	2	–
Hugo Corrales (USA)	11	3	1
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	5	–
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	7	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	–	8	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	21	9	–
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	–	–	5
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	6
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	–	–	7
Harold Warren (USA)	–	–	8
John Brown (USA)	–	–	9
FEATHERWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Cesar Soto (MEX)	C	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	C	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	–	–	C
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	1	6	–
Takao Imaoka (JAP)	2	–	–
Tony Espadas (MEX)	3	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	4	–	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	5	4	5
Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)	6	–	–
Edgar Barcenas (MEX)	7	–	–
Istvan Kovacs (HUN)	8	8	–
Carlos Rios (ARG)	9	–	–
Steve Robinson (GB)	10	–	–
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	24	1	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	15	2	–
Derrick Gainer (USA)	–	3	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	5	12
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	7	8
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	–	9	6
Lewis Wood (USA)	16	10	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	3
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	4
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	7
Tracy Patterson (USA)	–	–	9
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	10
JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Nestor Garza (MEX)	–	C	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	–	–	C
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	1	10	–
Michael Brodie (GB)	2	7	3
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	3	–	–
Willie Jorrin (USA)	4	–	6
Jesus Salud (USA)	5	–	5
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	6	–	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	7	–	–
Ariston Clayton (USA)	8	–	–
Oscar Larios (MEX)	9	–	–
John Johnson (USA)	10	8	9
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	1	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	2	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	3	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	15	4	–
Carlos Barreto (VEN)	–	5	–
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	29	6	7
Guty Espadas (MEX)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Ernesto Gray (COL)	–	–	2
Andrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	4
Sean Fletcher (USA)	–	–	8
Agapito Sanchez (DR)	25	–	10
BANTAMWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	C	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	3	7
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	2	–	5
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	3	–	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	4	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	5	7	–
Johnny Tapia (USA)	6	4	–
Jess Maca (PHIL)	7	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	8	–	–
Cruz Carbajal (MEX)	9	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	10	2	4
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	1	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	13	5	6
Jose Luis Valbuena (VEN)	–	6	–
Kozo Ishii (KOR)	–	8	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	18	9	–
Eidy Moya (VEN)	–	10	–
Bernardo Mendoza (CHI)	–	–	1
Jesus Perez (COL)	23	–	2
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	3
Johnny Armour (GB)	–	–	8
Pedro Rincon (COL)	–	–	9
Jorge Lacierva (MEX)	–	12	10
JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
In Joo Cho (KOR)	C	–	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	4
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	9	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	3	10	–
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	4	5	–
Eric Morel (USA)	5	3	3
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	6	–	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	7	1	10
Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)	8	–	11
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	9	–	–
Genaro Garcia (MEX)	10	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	5
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	4	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	6	12
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	7	8
Sompichai Kratchingdaeng (THAI)	–	8	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	19	12	6
Jose Rafael Sosa (ARG)	20	–	7
Med Lukchaopormasak (THAI)	–	–	9
FLYWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	C	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	C	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	C
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	1	–	–
David Guerault (FRA)	2	5	1
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	3	–	11
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	4	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	5	8	4
Panieng Sasiprabha Okuda (THAI)	6	–	–
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	7	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	8	9	5
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	9	–	–
Medgoen 3K Battery (THAI)	10	–	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	1	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	2	10
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	3	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	4	–
Panieng Okuda (THAI)	–	6	–
Hugo Soto (ARG)	–	7	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	–	10	–
Pedro Pena (USA)	–	–	2
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	3
Eric Morel (USA)	–	–	6
Isidro Garcia (USA)	11	–	7
Zoltan Lunka (TUR)	25	–	8
Gerson Guerrero (MEX)	12	–	9
JR. FLYWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	C
Yosam Choi (KOR)	1	10	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	2	4	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	3	1	2
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	4	3	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	5	–	–
Ridchichai Kiatprabhas (THAI)	6	–	–
Oscar Andrade (MEX)	7	–	12
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	8	–	–
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	9	–	–
Jose Luis Zepeda (MEX)	10	–	–
Medngon 3K Battery (THAI)	–	2	–
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	5	–
Nelson Dieppa (DR)	17	6	8
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	7	–
Jose Sanjuanelo (COL)	–	8	–
Jake Matlala (SA)	–	9	–
Pedro Rodriguez (COL)	–	–	1
Fernando Montiel (MEX)	–	–	3
Gill Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	4
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	5
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	–	6
Asdrubal Velasquez (COL)	–	–	7
Osvaldo Guerrero (MEX)	12	–	9
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	–	10
STRAWWEIGHTS	**WBC**	**WBA**	**IBF**
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	C	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	C
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	1	11	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	2	–	2
Daniel Reyes (COL)	3	8	6
Satoru Abe (JAP)	4	5	–
Jun Arlos (PHIL)	5	–	–
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	6	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	7	7	–
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	8	–	–
Udomdet Porpaoin (THAI)	9	9	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	10	–	8
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	1	–
Noel Arumbulet (VEN)	–	2	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	3	–
Hurricane Chulun (IND)	–	4	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	6	–
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	20	10	–
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	–	–	1
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	3
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	4
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	5
Alberto Rossel (PERU)	–	–	7
Rocky Lim (TWN)	–	–	9
Juan Herrera (COL)	–	–	10

DUEL IN THE DESERT

Cruz Upsets McGuigan In Vegas Scorcher

By Jack Welsh

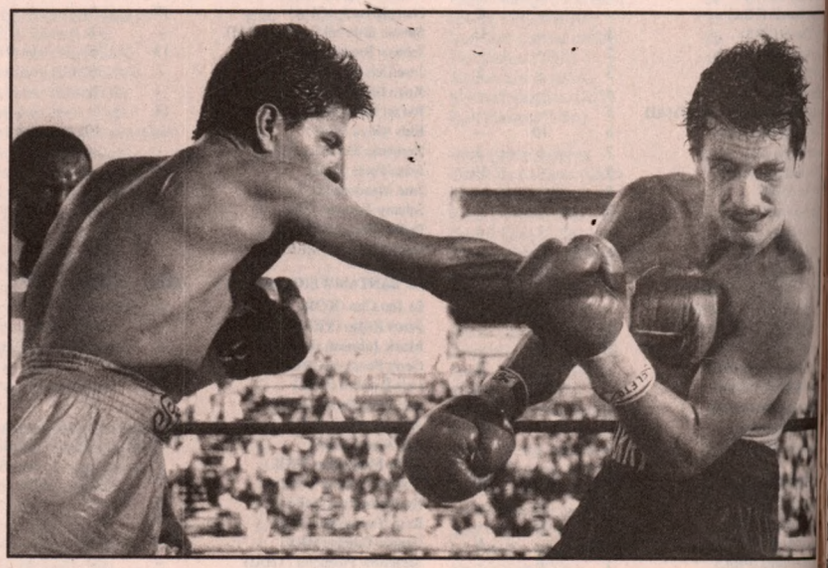
Funny thing about the female gender, it loves security—at any age. And it's going to take research of some longevity to find a better illustration than the 30 minutes after Stevie Cruz became WBA featherweight champion earlier this summer in Las Vegas.

The 22-year-old spoiler from Fort Worth, Texas, no doubt delighted his bride, Terry Ann, while stunning the Sweet Science's old hands with the manner in which he tarnished the international image of Ireland's effervescent Barry McGuigan. Cruz also showed his wife he is a man of domestic responsibility. Cruz was reflecting on how he took advantage of the golden opportunity against the 25-year-old McGuigan over 15 torrid rounds fought in a golden sunset, where the temperature was 110 degrees inside the ring pitch over the tennis courts in Caesars Palace parking lot.

Terry Ann Cruz, a comely brunette, w fashionably late for the postfight analysis the pavilion adjacent to a portable stadiu where 10,200 spectators sat in on To Rank's offering billed as "The Triple Hitter The petite Texas beauty turned more hea than just her husband's as she stepped on the dais to take a seat next to David Gorma the new 126-pound ruler's manager, and Jo Barrientes, his trainer.

Cruz, virtually unmarked except for mini-lump under a bloodshot left eye, kne exactly the right words to push Terry Ann buttons after four months as a defrocke Benedict, especially on media queries abou his future plans.

"We'll go back home and take a coupl



Stevie Cruz nails defending WBA featherweight champ Barry McGuigan with a right. Cruz walke into a great opportunity—and the sweltering Las Vegas heat—when he replaced Argentina Fernando Sosa, the WBA's number-one challenger, on short notice.

weeks off for a Mexican vacation," Cruz formed as Terry Ann beamed. "Then I'm going back to work in Fort Worth where I'm an apprentice at the Rivera Plumbing Company. It gives me something to do when 'm not fighting and training. I only make 6.50 an hour, so you know I'm going to ask for a raise."

Cruz only received $70,000, plus expens for a chance at the title, but it was still 10 times more than he had earned for any previ us bout. Top Rank's reward to McGuigan for his third title defense was $260,000, but Cruz quickly got an education on what is possible with a world title. McGuigan is also managed by the Irish Permanent Building Society, a marketing firm in Dublin, and their promotional endeavors for this exercise raised his total payoff to $960,000.

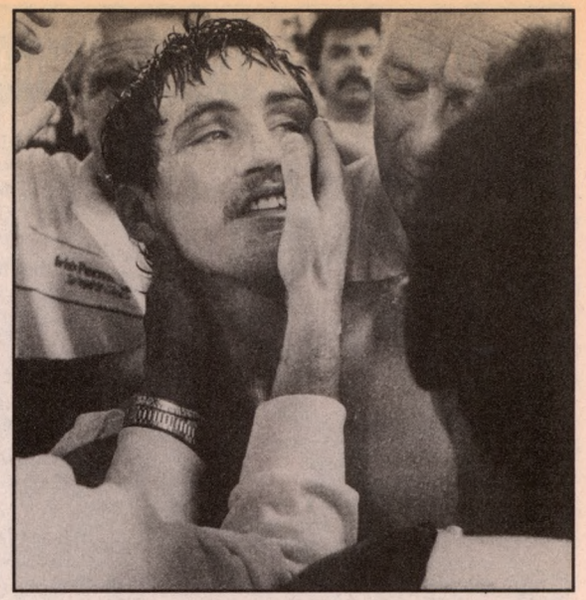
Fates laid the cornerstone for McGuigan's undoing on a unanimous, eye-lash decision when Argentina's Fernando Sosa, then the WBA's number-one chal-enger, lost the shot when he suffered double detached retinas while in training.

Bob Arum, Top Rank's board chairman, was semi-frantic when he called Gorman at his gym in Fort Worth, the aptly named fistic salon of "Super Pros," which spawned such quality stars as Donald Curry, undisputed world welterweight champion, and Gene Hatcher, who formerly ruled the WBA junior welters. Cruz was already training for a fight.

Naturally, Arum would like to promote a rematch, and Cruz' camp wouldn't oppose it, but the paperwork on financial offerings may not come easy, even though the public's response should be highly positive once the fight is announced.

What Arum really had tucked away in his fertile brain was McGuigan in a mega-million dollar showdown with Azumah Nelson, the WBC feather counterpart from Ghana who defended his laurels 24 hours before Cruz' victory, stopping Danilo Cabrera in the 10th round in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Cruz should eventually get the rich chance, but he must first strengthen his championship stature with a couple of meaningful victories.

Of course, across the pond on the Emerald Isle, there's going to be some loud brogues yelling for an immediate rematch when his strategists decide McGuigan is psychologically and physically fit to seek vengeance for only his second loss in a 31-fight career. Since turning pro in 1981, Barry has battered 24 victims inside the distance, an explosion that created global constituents and inadvertently grabbed the attention of high-level politicos everywhere, as Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic showed a touch of togetherness in reaching for a beer rather than a bomb every time McGuigan went to work.

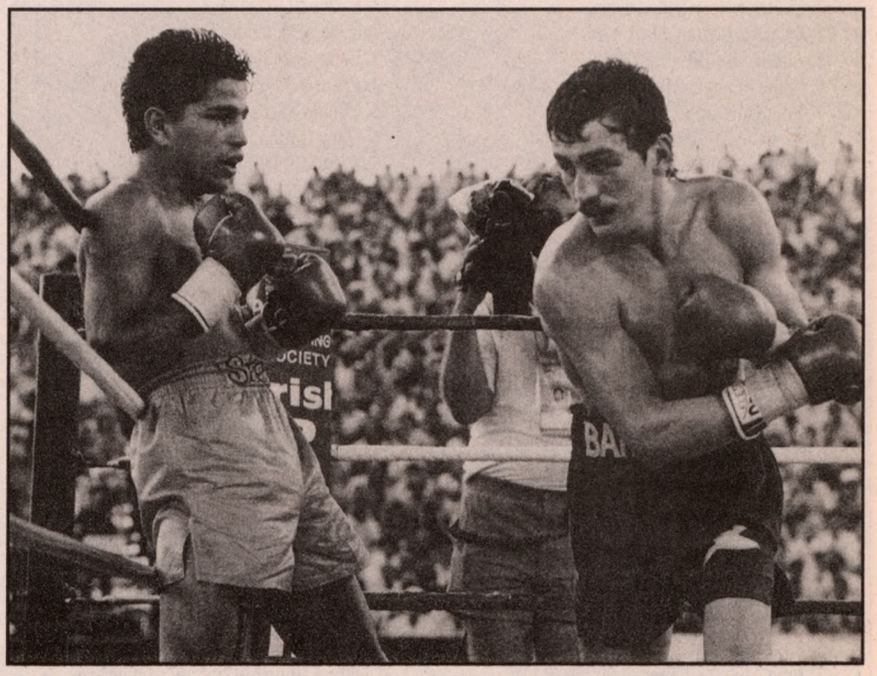


McGuigan was out on his feet after the fight, needing the aid of his handlers to carry him to his dressing room. McGuigan was so dazed, he kept asking for his wife, who was standing right next to him.

"I'm not that crazy about taking Stevie over to Ireland because of all the political unrest, but I won't say we won't go," Gorman hedged. "I have no problem with a rematch; it's just a matter of where."

Arum and Gorman agreed Cruz might have another commitment before he can renew that great fistic acquaintance with "The Clones Cyclone," a matchup that was virtually bell-to-bell action before the sleek Texan made a slick heist of the cherished laurels by knocking McGuigan down twice in the 15th round. Cruz also sent the defending champ spinning to the canvas in the 10th round with a ferocious left hook that seemed to emanate from the ring floor.

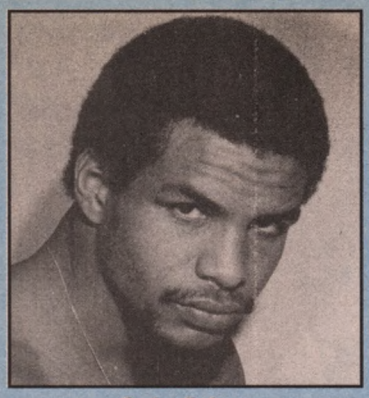
Gorman, speaking only an hour after Cruz improved his credentials to 26-1 (13) since turning pro in 1981, added: "I haven't put any serious thought to it yet. I'm almost



McGuigan felt he was fighting in Las Vegas at the wrong time of the year, though he had trained in 100-degree heat for five weeks at Palm Springs, California. "I never did get used to the heat and I knew it from the start," McGuigan said after surrendering the title.

From THE RING, September 1986

THE RING RATINGS, September 1986



Carlos DeLeon

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Michael Spinks, St. Louis, MO
1. **Trevor Berbick**, Canada
2. **Larry Holmes**, Easton, PA
3. **Tim Witherspoon**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Pinklon Thomas**, Wyandotte, MI
5. **Tony Tubbs**, Cincinnati, OH
6. **James Smith**, Magnolia, NC
7. **Frank Bruno**, England
8. **James (Buster) Douglas**, Columbus, OH
9. **Mike Weaver**, Diamond Bar, CA
10. **Carl Williams**, New York, NY

CRUISERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Carlos (Sugar) DeLeon, Puerto Rico
1. **Dwight Muhammad Qawi**, Camden, NJ
2. **Lee Roy Murphy**, Chicago, IL
3. **Evander Holyfield**, Atlanta, GA
4. **Bernard Benton**, Detroit, MI
5. **Alfonzo Ratliff**, Chicago, IL
6. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
7. **John Odhiambo**, Uganda
8. **Bert Cooper**, Philadelphia, PA
9. **Osvaldo Ocasio**, Puerto Rico
10. **Ricky Parkey**, Morristown, TN

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN
2. **Slobodan Kacar**, Yugoslavia
3. **Dennis Andries**, England
4. **Eddie Davis**, Freeport, NY
5. **J.B. Williamson**, Inglewood, CA
6. **Willie Edwards**, Detroit, MI
7. **Prince Mama Mohammed**, Ghana
8. **Jean-Marie Emebe**, Cameroon
9. **Bobby Czyz**, Wanaque, NJ
10. **Leslie Stewart**, Trinidad

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
2. **John Mugabi**, Uganda
3. **Robbie Sims**, Brockton, MA
4. **Herol Graham**, England
5. **Don Lee**, Gary, IN
6. **Tony Sibson**, England
7. **James Kinchen**, San Diego, CA
8. **Doug DeWitt**, Yonkers, NY
9. **Lindell Holmes**, Detroit, MI
10. **Michael Olajide**, Canada

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Thomas Hearns, Detroit, MI
1. **John Mugabi**, Uganda
2. **Mike McCallum**, New York, NY
3. **Buster Drayton**, Philadelphia, PA
4. **Matthew Hilton**, Canada
5. **Davey Moore**, Bronx, NY
6. **Julian Jackson**, Virgin Islands
7. **Carlos Santos**, Puerto Rico
8. **Donald Curry**, Fort Worth, TX
9. **Milton McCrory**, Detroit, MI
10. **Mark Medal**, Jersey City, NJ

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Donald Curry, Fort Worth, TX
1. **Tommy Ayers**, Cincinnati, OH
2. **Maurice Blocker**, Washington, D.C.
3. **Lloyd Honeyghan**, England
4. **Simon Brown**, Washington, D.C.
5. **Johnny Bumphus**, Clementon, NJ
6. **Marlon Starling**, Hartford, CT
7. **Mark Breland**, New York, NY
8. **Manning Galloway**, Columbus, OH
9. **Colin Jones**, Wales
10. **Tyrone Trice**, Detroit, MI

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Patrizio Oliva**, Italy
2. **Rene Arredondo**, Mexico
3. **Lonnie Smith**, Denver, CO
4. **Frankie Warren**, Corpus Christi, TX
5. **Ubaldo Sacco**, Argentina
6. **Gary Hinton**, Philadelphia, PA
7. **Ronnie Shields**, Port Arthur, TX
8. **Terry Marsh**, England
9. **Rodolfo (Gato) Gonzalez**, Mexico
10. **Joe Louis Manley**, Atlantic City, NJ

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Livingstone Bramble**, Passaic, NJ
2. **Hector Camacho**, New York, NY
3. **Jimmy Paul**, Detroit, MI
4. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
5. **Jose Luis Ramirez**, Mexico
6. **Tyrone Crawley**, Philadelphia, PA
7. **Darryl Tyson**, Washington, D.C.
8. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards**, Uganda
9. **Meldrick Taylor**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **Terrence Alli**, New York, NY

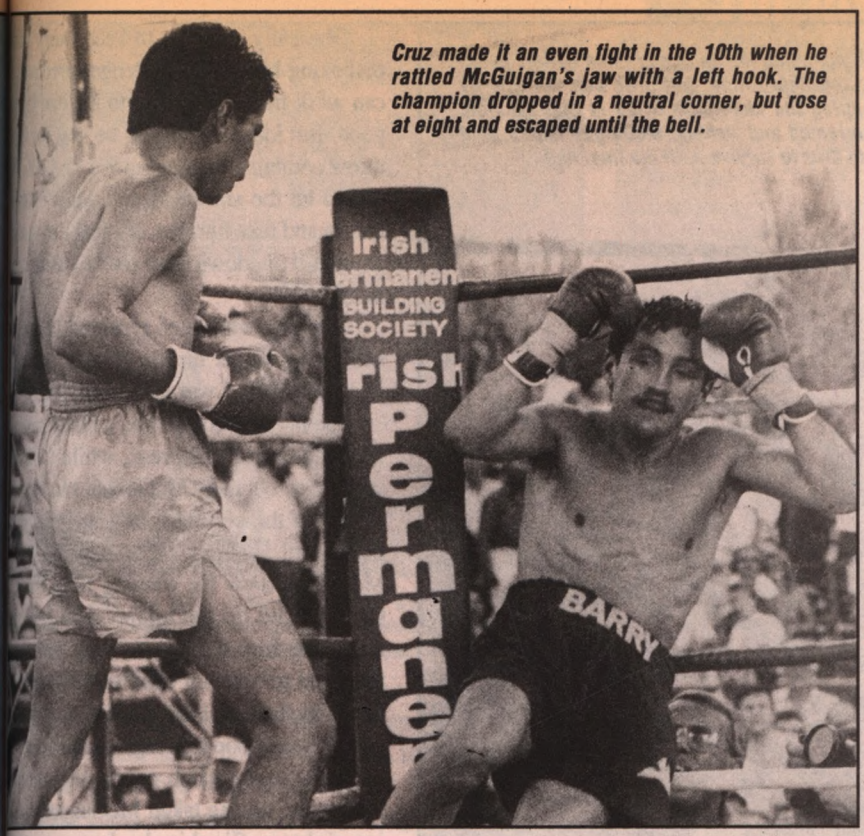
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alfredo Layne, Panama
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, Mexico
2. **Rocky Lockridge**, Maple Shade, NJ
3. **Juan LaPorte**, Puerto Rico
4. **Johnny de la Rosa**, Detroit, MI
5. **Barry Michael**, Australia
6. **Mario Martinez**, Mexico
7. **Dwight Pratchett**, Gary, IN
8. **Francisco Tomas Cruz**, Brazil
9. **Lester Ellis**, Australia
10. **Kenny Baysmore**, Washington, D.C.

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Steve Cruz, Fort Worth, TX
1. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
2. **Barry McGuigan**, Ireland
3. **Ki-Yung Chung**, Korea
4. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico
5. **Eusebio Pedroza**, Panama
6. **Calvin Grove**, Pottstown, PA
7. **Jackie Beard**, Detroit, MI
8. **Bernard Taylor**, Knoxville, TN
9. **Antonio Esparragoza**, Venezuela
10. **Joe Marmolejos**, Panama

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. **Victor Callejas**, Puerto Rico
2. **Samart Payakaroon**, Thailand
3. **Juan (Kid) Meza**, Los Angeles, CA
4. **Loris Stecca**, Italy
5. **Jaime Garza**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Julian Solis**, Puerto Rico
7. **Harold Petty**, Fort Worth, TX
8. **James Pipps**, Vidor, TX
9. **Ramon Dominguez**, Argentina
10. **Mike Ayala**, San Antonio, TX

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Bernardo Pinango, Venezuela
1. **Miguel Lora**, Colombia
2. **Gilberto Roman**, Mexico
3. **Khaosai Galaxy**, Thailand
4. **Jiro Wantanabe**, Japan
5. **Jeff Fenech**, Australia
6. **Gaby Canizales**, Laredo, TX
7. **Albert Davila**, Mexico
8. **Greg Richardson**, Youngstown, OH
9. **Kelvin Seabrooks**, Charlotte, NC
10. **Daniel Zaragoza**, Mexico

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sot Chitalada, Thailand
1. **Jung-Koo Chang**, Korea
2. **Hilario Zapata**, Panama
3. **Gabriel Bernal**, Mexico
4. **Myung-Woo Yuh**, Korea
5. **Joey Olivo**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Paul Gonzalez**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Isidro Perez**, Mexico
8. **Jorge Cano**, Mexico
9. **Dodie Penalosa**, Philippines
10. **Benedicto Murillo**, Panama



Cruz made it an even fight in the 10th when he rattled McGuigan's jaw with a left hook. The champion dropped in a neutral corner, but rose at eight and escaped until the bell.

re there will be a rematch with McGuigan, ut it probably won't be in our next outing."

It was a rugged disappointment for cGuigan, a shaggy-haired, mustachioed hlete with deep-set, searching brown eyes at seem to reflect the strain of constant ocket wars in his native land, a Catholic-rotestant political tragedy reaching back early 700 years. This young fist fighter, efreshingly shorn of any pretense other than intense desire to excel, wanted to enhance s reputation on this side of the Atlantic. cGuigan gave his family and far-flung dmirers some anxious moments when he as on the verge of collapse at the final bell. nd another 20 seconds remained as Cruz illed home stinging combinations, the gal-nt Irishman would have been a knockout ictim.

The beaten champion was a handful for rainer Eddie Shaw, and other seconds, to get to his dressing room. Once seated, cGuigan complained of headaches and ppeared to be disoriented. When he said he elt nausea, Dr. Flip Homansky ordered an mbulance to take the fighter to Valley ospital as a precautionary measure. Duane ord, a Nevada State Athletic Commission ember, said the former champion "kept sking for his wife even when she was stand-g beside him. Barry was scared that if he went to sleep something would happen to him. The hospital was purely for an overnight observation and to receive a CAT scan. McGuigan kept saying, 'Duane, am I all right? Is my head okay?!'"

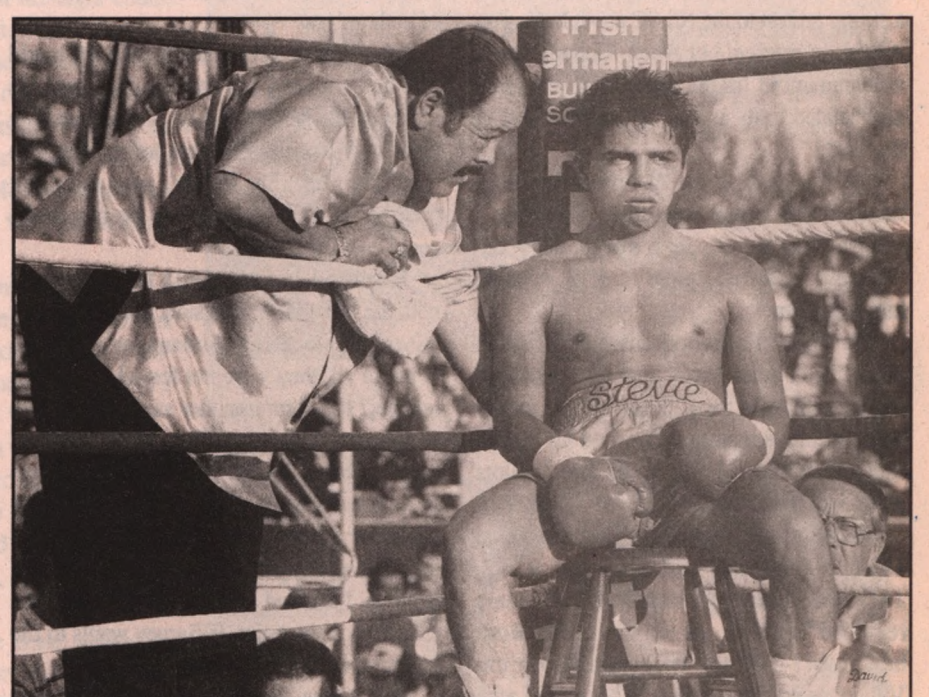
Thankfully, all tests proved negative, and McGuigan was back at Caesars Palace the next afternoon for a poolside press conference. He may have lost his title, but not his sharp Irish wit.

"They want me to come back for another CAT scan because they can't find my brain," Barry laughed. "If you ask my mother, Katie, if she wants me to retire, I can only say she's wanted me to retire since I was 11."

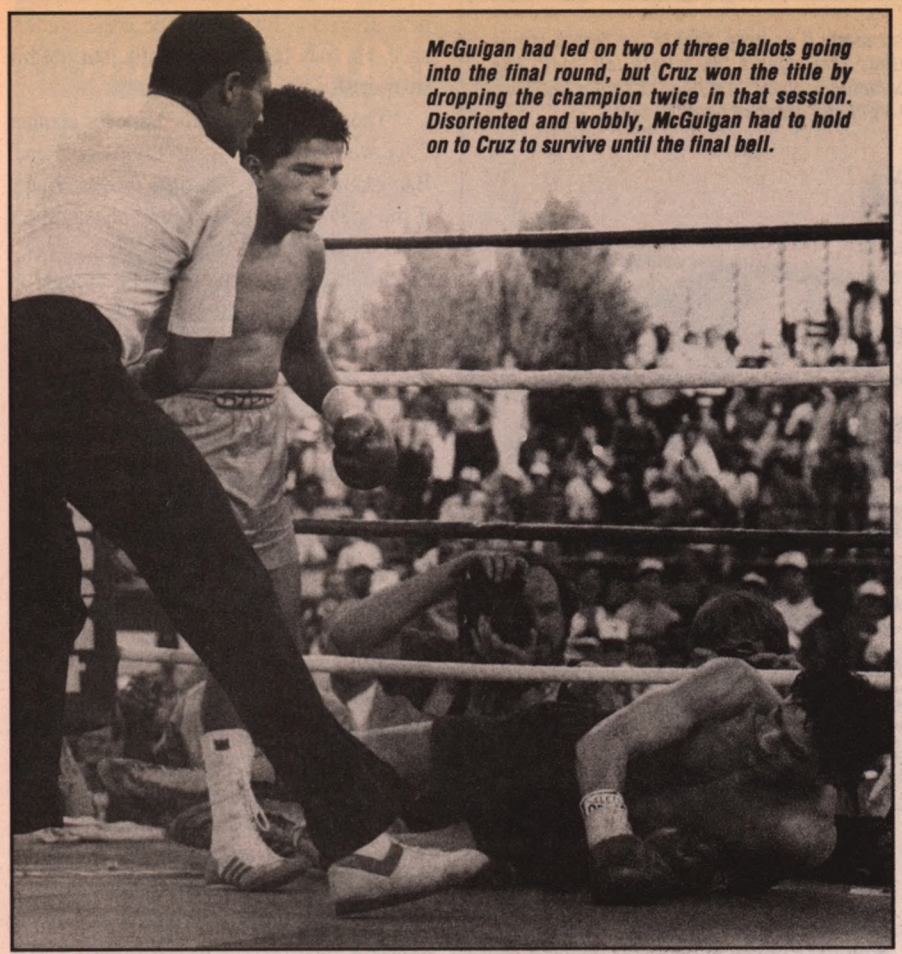
McGuigan later contended he "fought in the wrong time of the year in Las Vegas' desert," even though he had trained for five weeks at Palm Springs, California, with Roberto Duran.

"We worked out every day in a circus tent with the flaps down, and the heat inside was at least well over 100. Duran said it was hotter than Panama," said McGuigan, who has been artfully handled by Barney Eastwood, the most prominent legal bookmaker in Ireland. "I never did get used to the heat and I knew it from the start. I lost the fight, and I don't want to make any excuses. I must give Cruz credit because I knew he was a very tough fighter. I'm deeply disappointed for my supporters who came over from Ireland. I've talked to my mother on the phone, and she said everyone has come by the house and said that I'm still their champion. Right now I'm still very tired, and I want to take a long rest, and then I'll make a decision about boxing."

Eastwood, who intimated any retirement plans would have to come directly from his



Joe Barrientes, Cruz' trainer, said he had to slap his fighter around a couple of times between the sixth and seventh rounds for his lethargic willingness to let McGuigan back into the fight.



McGuigan had led on two of three ballots going into the final round, but Cruz won the title by dropping the champion twice in that session. Disoriented and wobbly, McGuigan had to hold on to Cruz to survive until the final bell.

protege, did not believe the heat was a factor considering the hard-hitting pace both fighters contributed. Earlier, Eastwood had issued a strong protest to the NSAC about having an American referee, but when Richard Steele was announced for the assignment, the manager lauded him "as one of the three best in the world."

"I objected to an American referee because WBA rules state there should be a neutral referee," Eastwood advised. "However, Steele is great ... I've watched him many times."

However, Eastwood changed his tune about Steele after McGuigan was penalized for a low blow in the 12th round. The infraction cost him a majority draw and his crown. McGuigan had led on two of three ballots going into the 15th round.

Judge Angel Tovar of Venezuela voted 143-142, Guy Jutras of Canada saw it 142-141, and Medardo Villalobos of Panama recorded 143-139, all for Cruz. THE RING had it 143-140 for the new champion. Villalobos and Jutras were so impressed with Cruz' vicious assault in the finale that they both gave him a 10-7 for the round. It was particularly significant on Jutras' tally since he had McGuigan leading 134-132 after 14 rounds. It was a worthy evaluation on behalf of both judges.

Steele, a 15-year veteran with 36 world title bouts among his credits, explained his action on the penalty thusly: "I was watching them very closely, and kept telling Barry to 'keep 'em up,' but I didn't take the point until he hit Cruz squarely on the cup, and I could hear the crack."

Eastwood said he would leave a protest with the Nevada commission, but Ford didn't put much stock in the manager's protest. "First of all, they were not forced to take the referee," the commissioner said. "There was an agreement with the WBA. If we permitted them to bring in three neutral judges, we could use a Nevada referee. In fact, the WBA asked for Steele. As for the point deduction for the low blow, I personally feel it was well overdue. I counted nine low blows before the referee took the point. If Barney wants to file a protest, I think it's just sour grapes."

In the final media conference 72 hours before the fight, Cruz and Gorman emerged as accurate seers.

"Basically, I expect to keep Barry off by outboxing him," the challenger predicted. "I can work inside and bang to the body pretty good. But ideally, it would be best for me to throw combinations, and move, and jab. That would be the smarter fight. Maybe sucker him in and fake him out. If I feel I'm running down, I'll dig down deep for that extra something."

Gorman, who later admitted he made a substantial wager on his protege "when the odds were right," was quite confident.

The opening round was a chess match as McGuigan tried to press, while Cruz was content to counter. McGuigan ran from his corner in the second round, digging to the body and arching right-handed hooks. McGuigan drew his warning from Steele as Cruz picked up the tempo with combinations. The Irish champion, using head feints, managed to back up Cruz in the fourth, and just at the bell, he landed a low shot that triggered Cruz to bop him high on his head.

Early in the sixth canto, the unruffled challenger, having taken McGuigan's booming rights unflinchingly, began to move. McGuigan dropped in a right, but Cruz countered with a long left and right that stunned McGuigan, making him hold at mid-ring. Before the round ended, Cruz backed up the Clones wonder with a salvo of eight stinging punches. McGuigan's left eye was now cut.

Cruz' power was now surfacing, and the crowd roared as he again backed up McGuigan with combinations, the last of the string snapping McGuigan's head back. As the seventh wound down, McGuigan struck back, including two low shots on the hip that drew warnings.

Suddenly when it appeared the challenger was ready to dictate terms, he inexplicably became a reluctant dragon offensively, as McGuigan drove home right after right. Cruz never tottered, but his left eye began to swell underneath before the bell for the ninth.

Cruz finally shed his lethargy, making it an even fight in the collective scoring midway through the 10th when he rattled McGuigan's jaw with a left hook that had a little dispy-doodle in it. The champion nearly made orbit before dropping like an anvil in a neutral corner. McGuigan collected himself by the time Steele tolled "eight," and escaped from harm's way, ducking and swaying until the bell.

McGuigan's Irish songsters renewed their verve midway through the 12th with the

...ing Cruz has his hand raised in victory by referee Richard ... "Don't ever forget I told you guys Stevie wasn't coming in here ...d meat for McGuigan's benefit," said David Gorman, the new ...round ruler's manager.

..."Here we go, here we go,"... but the champion, after being ...n by a left-right, finally raised Steele's ire, losing a point for a ...e to Cruz' groin. Just when it seemed that Cruz was coming ...McGuigan going, the Irishman, visibly tiring on unsteady legs, ...ed what super heart can do, winning the 13th and 14th rounds ...l cards. But it was McGuigan's last hurrah.

...With his cornermen waving frantically and yelling to "press, ...press," Cruz heard the crowd explode as the final three min... ...arrived. Now it was the contender from the Lone Star state ...wing those big right hands. He hurt McGuigan with two rights. ...delivered a seven-punch volley to the head, plus a right that ...McGuigan sliding down the ropes. Again at the eight count, ...Guigan's supreme courage demanded that he rise.

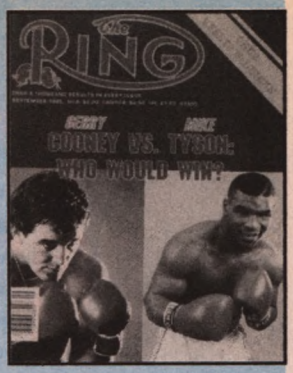
...Disoriented and wobbly, McGuigan, drawn and bleeding, reeled ...er a left-left-right-left to the head, and then dropped in Cruz' ...er. This time Steele peered deeply in the champion's eyes as he ...ted. When McGuigan managed to pull himself upright, Steele ...m continue. Desperate to finish on his feet, McGuigan grabbed ...with a stranglehold in order to survive the final 30 seconds. ...ould hardly stand at the bell.

...In the post-mortems, Cruz couldn't help but smile when a ...ish scribe asked him about the strange letdown after he had hurt ...Guigan in the sixth and seventh rounds. "I'll admit I have a ten...cy to stun an opponent, and then start to back off. I guess I ...y about punching myself out."

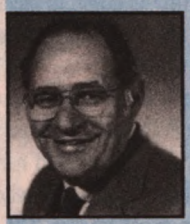
..."Yeah, I had to slap Stevie a couple of times after the way he ...t to town in the sixth and seventh rounds because he has that ...ency to hurt guys and then let them off the hook," admitted ...rientes. Gorman, who now has a third world champion since ...g the business a full-time shot 10 years ago, agreed the finish ...close.

..."We didn't want to take any chances, but we knew we had to ...l out everything in the later rounds because McGuigan has ...en that's where he's tough," Gorman said. "Don't ever forget I ...you guys Stevie wasn't coming in here as dead meat for ...Guigan's benefit. But this is just the beginning." ■

THE RING, September 1986



The Cover: History has brought some great clashes of clout like King Kong vs. Godzilla, Willie Mays vs. Mickey Mantle ... and Ethel Merman vs. Mary Martin. This issue raised the question of who would win the titanic battle of big bombers: Gerry Cooney or Mike Tyson? THE RING predicted it would be the fight of the 1980s—and a first-round knockout for Tyson.

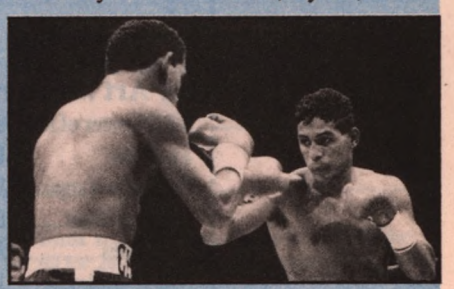


Ring Sense: THE RING took an excerpt from a piece by Ronald Levao trying to make sense of professional boxing. The essay looked at one of the paradoxes of the sport—the odd relationship between "The Fight Doctor" Ferdie Pacheco *(pictured)* and Frank "The Animal" Fletcher.

Fools Gold: Duane Bobick was one of a handful of fighters for whom many experts predicted great things. Bobick, however, fell by the wayside along with other promising fighters like Marvis Frazier, Howard Davis, and Cooney.

Duran's Last Stand: THE RING wondered how much more Roberto Duran had left after losing a 10-round split decision to Robbie Sims, Marvin Hagler's half brother. With his right eye lumpy and bloodshot, Duran looked a long way from his glory days.

Macho Gets a Gift: Most ringside observers felt Edwin Rosario deserved a points victory over the elusive, stylish, undefeated Hector "Macho" Camacho in their WBC lightweight title bout. Two of the three judges, however, differed with that opinion, giving Camacho a controversial split decision.

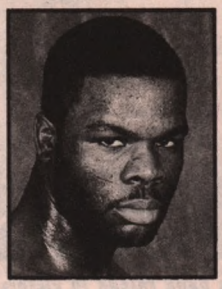


LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

GRANT LOOKS TO TAKE THE POLE POSITION

One way or another, HBO is intent on following up the November 13 **Lennox Lewis-Evander Holyfield** rematch with a blockbuster challenge for heavyweight heir apparent **Michael Grant** the following week. The cable network's first choice of opposition was **Ike Ibeabuchi**. We all know what happened there. Their second choice was **David Tua**. But negotiations didn't get very far, as Tua is already ranked number one by the IBF and would be foolish to risk his rating and a guaranteed title shot against such a dangerous opponent. So it looks like HBO is going to have to settle for their third choice. And as far as back-up plans for back-up plans go, it doesn't get much better than Grant vs. **Andrew Golota**.



Grant-Golota: Heavyweights with something to prove

In fact, Grant-Golota may be the most marketable of the three proposed matchups because the Polish brute, whose two wars with **Riddick Bowe** three years ago made him a household name, is still far more recognizable than either Ibeabuchi or Tua. Grant, 30-0 (21), is in need of a top-10 opponent against whom he can prove himself, and Golota, 34-3 (28), who is ranked seventh by THE RING, should provide an excellent test. The fight makes perfect sense for Grant, for HBO, and for the fans. But what about Golota, who seemed to be in the running to make millions against **Mike Tyson**?

"You just never know what's gonna happen with Tyson, and we can't sit around waiting for that fight," said Carl Moretti, matchmaker for Golota's promotional company, Main Events. "Who knows if Tyson will really be ready to fight on October 2, and who knows if he'll be ready to take on an opponent like Golota right after that? Grant is the right move for Golota, it's a good payday. And when you really think about it, if he loses to Grant in a good fight, that probably helps him get Tyson later."

The contracts hadn't quite been finalized as we went to press, but all indications suggested that November 20 will be the date, and, with Madison Square Garden already reserved for that night, Atlantic City will be the place. Grant's going to have to strap that oversized protective cup on extra tight, because the toughest test of his career is ready to strike.

LISTEN UP

Quartey: Gonna go to Ghana

Don't expect the legal troubles of IBF junior middleweight champion **Fernando Vargas** to affect his boxing schedule. Main Events is looking to go ahead with Vargas' mandatory defense against **Winky Wright** in the late-fall, provided Wright's promoter, **Don King**, doesn't win the purse bids ... Former WBA welterweight champ **Ike Quartey**, inactive since dropping a split decision to **Oscar De La Hoya** in February, will finally return to the ring on October 23, when he fights a charity bout in his native Ghana against an opponent to be determined ... A pair of **Naseem Hamed** 11th-round knockout victims, **Paul Ingle** and **Manuel Medina**, are scheduled to square off in Hull, England, on November 13. The IBF featherweight title held by Medina will be on the line, and the winner will be in an excellent position to get a rematch with "The Prince" next year ... Following **Eric Morel's** sparkling knockout over **Francisco Espitia** in August, talk of pairing the '96 U.S. Olympian with IBF junior bantamweight king **Mark Johnson** began circulating. As attractive as that matchup is, don't count on it happening just yet. Morel's manager, **Bob Lynch**, told THE RING he's not sure his undefeated prospect is ready for "Too Sharp," and would like a few more experience-building bouts before putting him in against the top 115-pounder in the world.

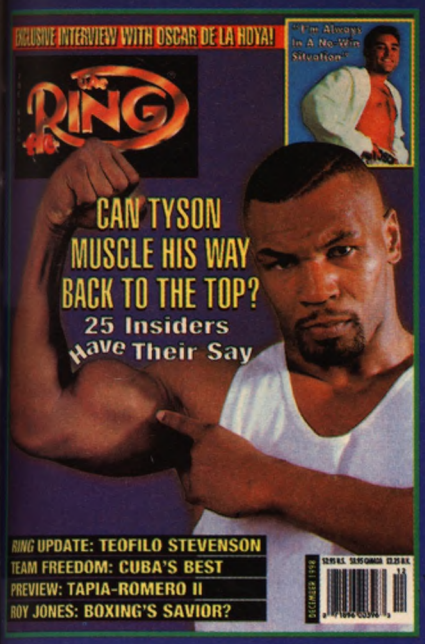
FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton Superbook

Las Vegas Hilton

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Fernando Vargas	David Reid	3-2	Great unification match
Michael Grant	David Tua	2-1	Grant has too much size and stamina
Roy Jones	Antonio Tarver	12-1	Tarver not ready
Shane Mosley	James Page	Pick-'em	Very, very interesting
Zab Judah	Terronn Millett	4-1	Put me on the Judah bandwagon



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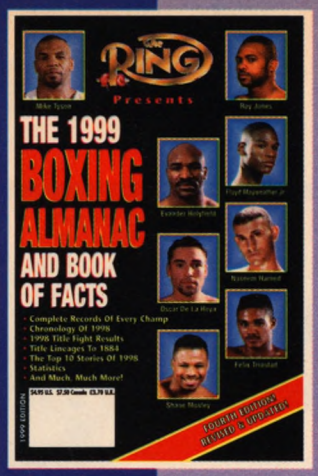

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- Columns by renowned boxing journalists
- THE RING's Top 10 ratings in 17 weight classes and the records of all ranked fighters
- THE RING Classic: A selected story from THE RING's 77-year-old archives, including THE RING ratings for that year and a summary of the issue in which the story appeared

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